C64
GAMES
SYSTEM

Commodore

C64
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Historical Commodore C64GS magazine advertisements and reviews collection.

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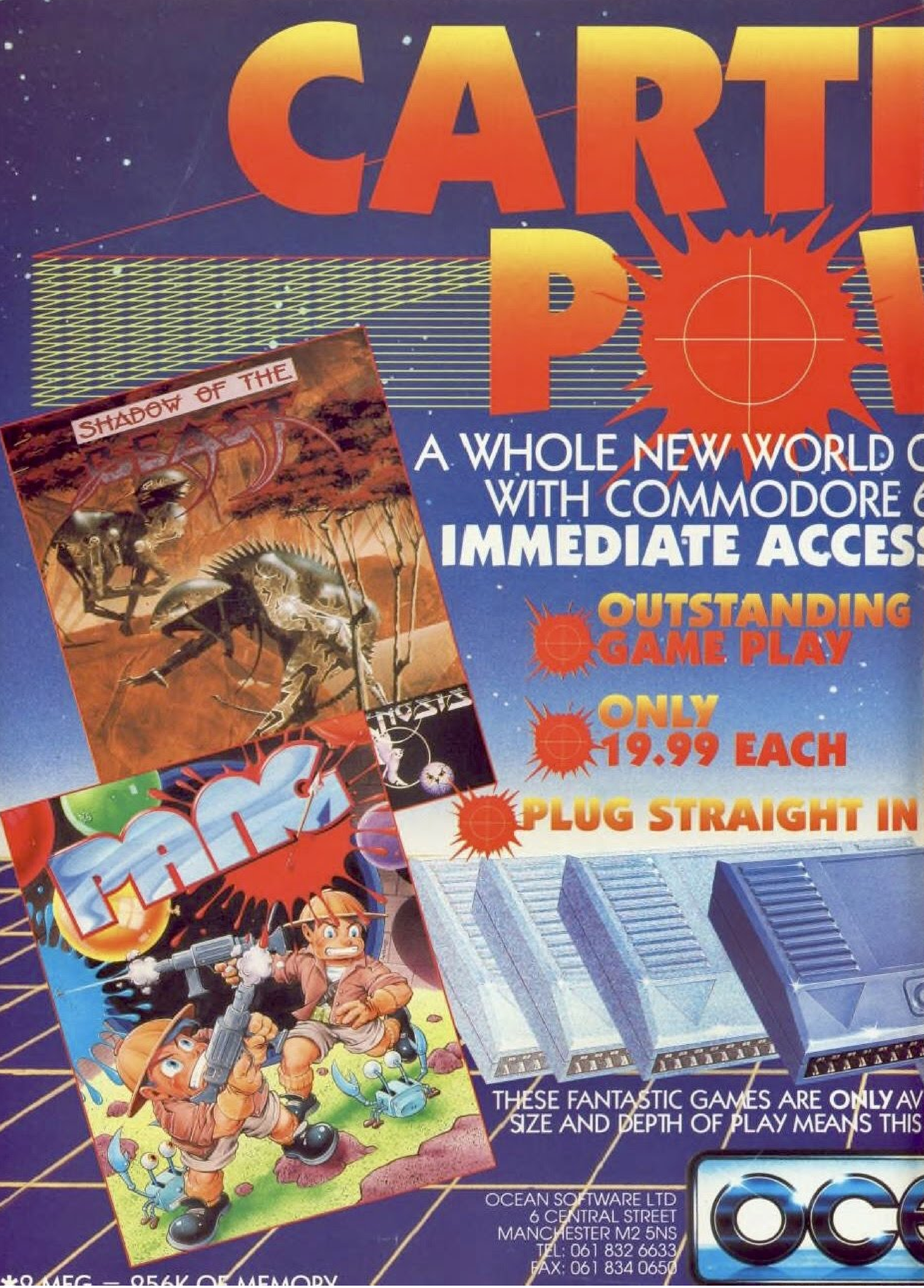

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CHASE H.Q. II
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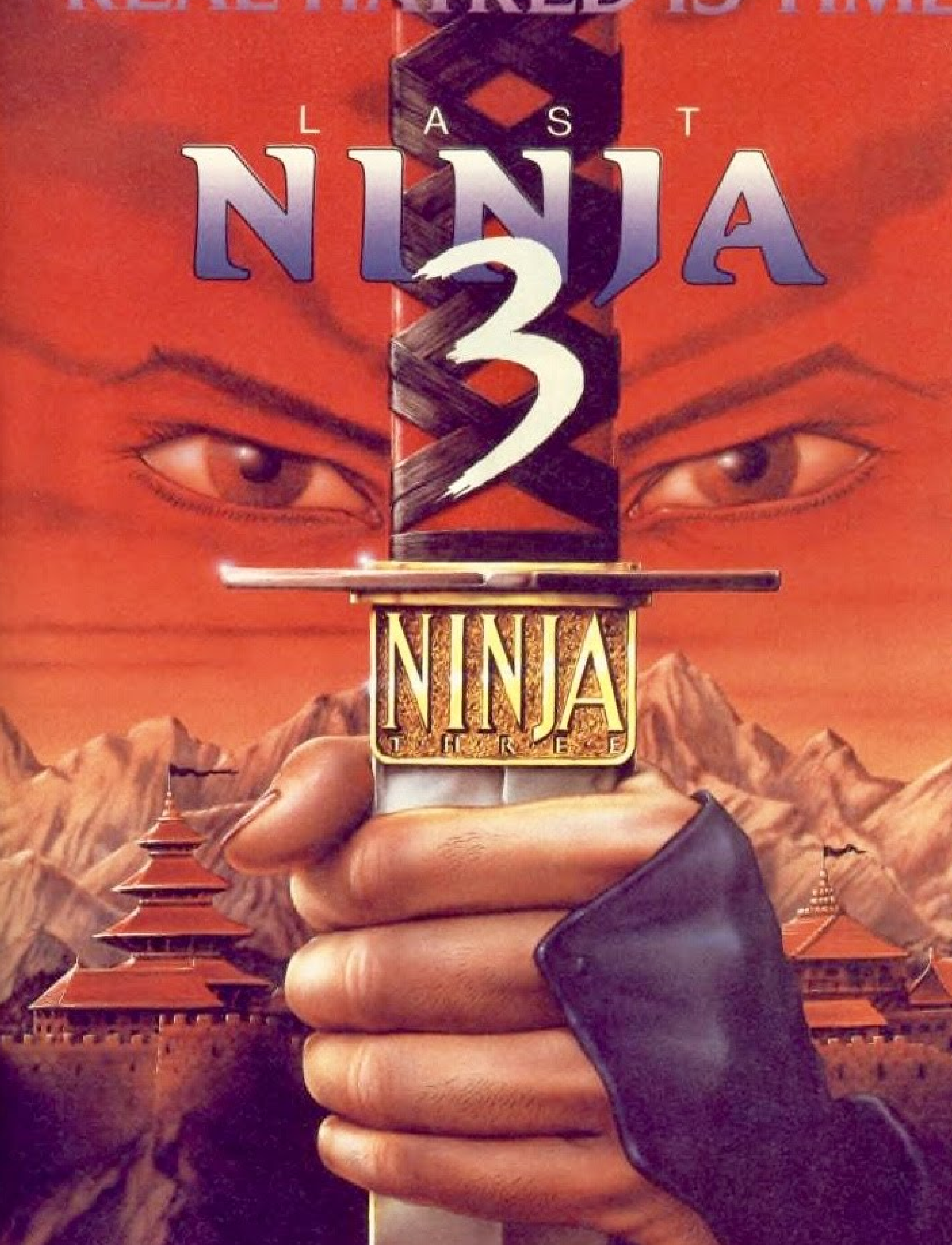
IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN MAKE 'EM.

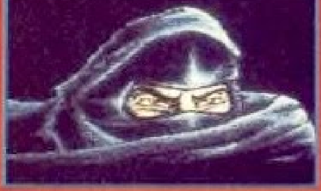
FROM ALL GOOD
SOFTWARE STOCKISTS

REAL HATRED IS TIMELESS

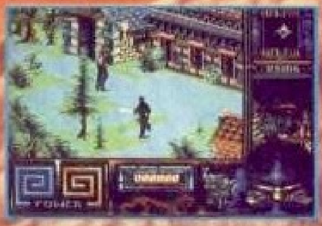
LAST NINJA 3



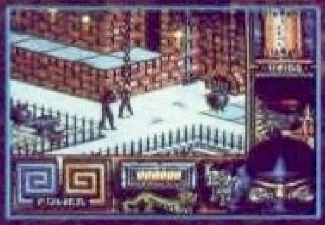
Ninja 3 is here and ready to explode onto your screen with the most glorious display of graphics and animated fight sequences ever seen in this type of game.



With a massive introduction sequence, incredibly detailed '3D' background graphics and a more than generous helping of all-out action, Ninja 3 displays a degree of excellence never before experienced by even the most seasoned Ninja fan. Ninja 3 – A game of epic proportions.



Feel the realism, allow yourself to witness the magical world of Ninjitsu, spiritualism, experience the mystical atmosphere of the Tibetan Temples. Remember, always remain in control of your stealth and cunning as you do battle once again with the most treacherous purveyor of evil, Kunitoki.



Actual C64 Screens

Regarded as a licence within itself the highly acclaimed Last Ninja series reaches an unequalled pinnacle of excellence with the arrival of Ninja 3. Seldom has a series of games won as many awards world wide as The Last Ninja. NEVER HAS SUCH A SERIES OF GAMES JUST GOT BETTER AND BETTER . . .

Available on Cartridge for C64 Computers
and the C64GS Console.
Also for the Amiga and Atari ST
Home Computers.

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S Y S T E M 3

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BALLOONIN' AROUND!..
NO TIME TO SHOOT THE BREEZE!..

In fact you've hardly set your feet down in the mighty U.S.S.R. and it's all action. You sight up your latest and mos formidable bubble poppin' piece:..but now that bounce bomb has just multiplied!!! Tour the world in the mos addictive arcade game of the year from Mitchell Corp A quick eye and super fast reflexes will give you just a half-chance of a win... the other half will come i the bounce goes your way

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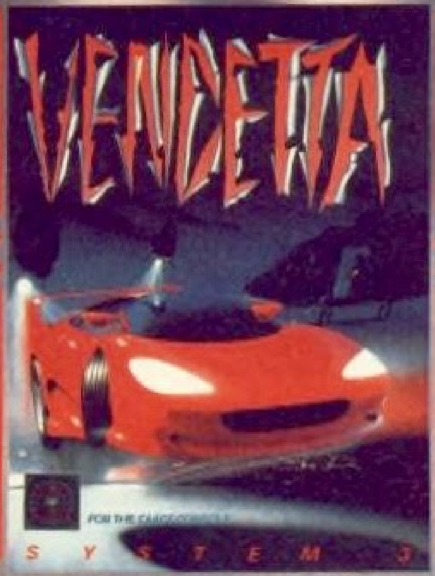


Intent on obtaining the secret formula your brother has devised for developing the ultimate weapon, a blood thirsty terrorist gang has kidnapped his daughter. The same terrorist syndicate you had dispersed in Saigon some years previously.

Your work now seemed incomplete ... you have to squash them once and for all ...

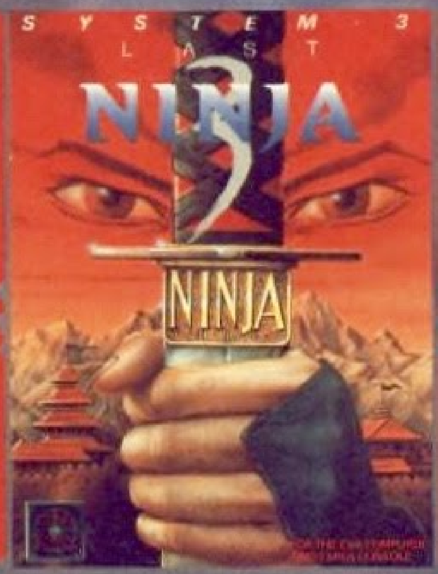
THE PRESS SAY

'Quite simply an amazing product.'

ZZAP! 64

The graphics are absolutely perfect, and the sonics are superb, the bundle is linked with pure gloss that helps shine over any small inadequacies. VENDETTA is not just the best arcade adventure ever, it invents a new meaning for the term.

YOUR COMMODORE


S Y S T E M 3
LAST
NINJA
3
NINJA
ACTUAL C64 SCREENS
FOR THE C64 COMPUTER AND C64GS CONSOLE

Dragged through the vortex of time and space, the Ninja is brought to Tibet ... To the Palace of Mysteries. The Shogun Kunitoki, the all-powerful master of the palace, has brought you, the last of the Ninjas, to the very heart of his corruption and evil.

Nothing has resisted the Shogun's onslaught against the World. Only you stand between the old World of Order and the new Realm of Chaos.

REAL HATRED IS TIMELESS

Exciting and demanding gameplay over 6 different levels.

Incredibly detailed '3D' background graphics.

Dramatic 'real-life' animation of the Ninja and his opponents.

Innovative puzzles to solve and many objects to collect.

Atmospheric music on every level.

HOT GAMES
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4 explosive cartridges typical of System 3's remarkable reputation for producing outstanding original computer games.

Each contains 4 MEG of dynamic arcade action designed to make even the most

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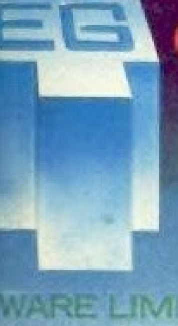
hardened games player very hot under the collar.

Take up the challenge and experience the ultimate fantasy world in your home with these highly recommended titles that threaten to melt your joystick.

- Greatly enhanced gameplay.
- These are the only games with an amazing 4 MEG of memory.



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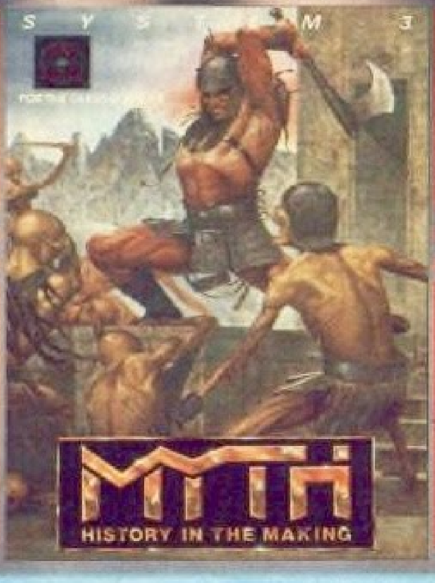


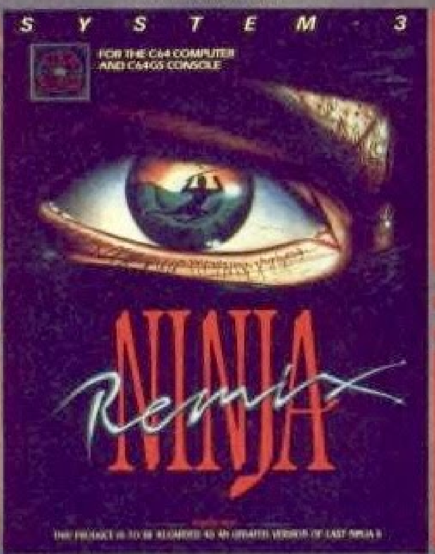
ACTUAL C64GS SCREENS

You are taken far, far back in time to confront the evil God Dameron, who has taken control and is changing good Gods to bad. He is upsetting our past, our future and ultimately our destiny.
Myths are no longer a theory, myth is reality.
Myth is HISTORY IN THE MAKING...

THE PRESS SAY

This almost looks like an Amiga game that someone has managed to get running on the C64. Superb animation, tremendous sound, and bags of atmosphere make this a must buy. If you want another reason for parting with your cash, it's also huge and there's lots of variety in there. I was impressed – you will be too.
ACE

I don't think is would be exaggerating when I say that MYTH is one of the best games on the C64. It has just about everything necessary to make it a classic.
COMMODORE USER


SYSTEM 3
FOR THE C64 COMPUTER AND C64GS CONSOLE
NINJA
Remix

ACTUAL C64 SCREENS

NINJA REMIX is based on the successful Last Ninja II. REMIX retains all the features that made Ninja II an award winning product PLUS, it has the following enchancements.
Remixed music on all seven levels.
Exciting 'film-like' animated introduction sequence.
Greatly enhanced player status area.

THE ULTIMATE NINJA

NINJA REMIX is a true value-for-money product that provides:
Exciting arcade style combat action.
Thought provoking puzzles to solve.
Dramatic 'real-life' animation of both Ninja and opponents.
State of the art programming.

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Super-charged super-fighters who risk all defending America against the world's deadliest forces.
A combat unit of indomitable strength and courage.
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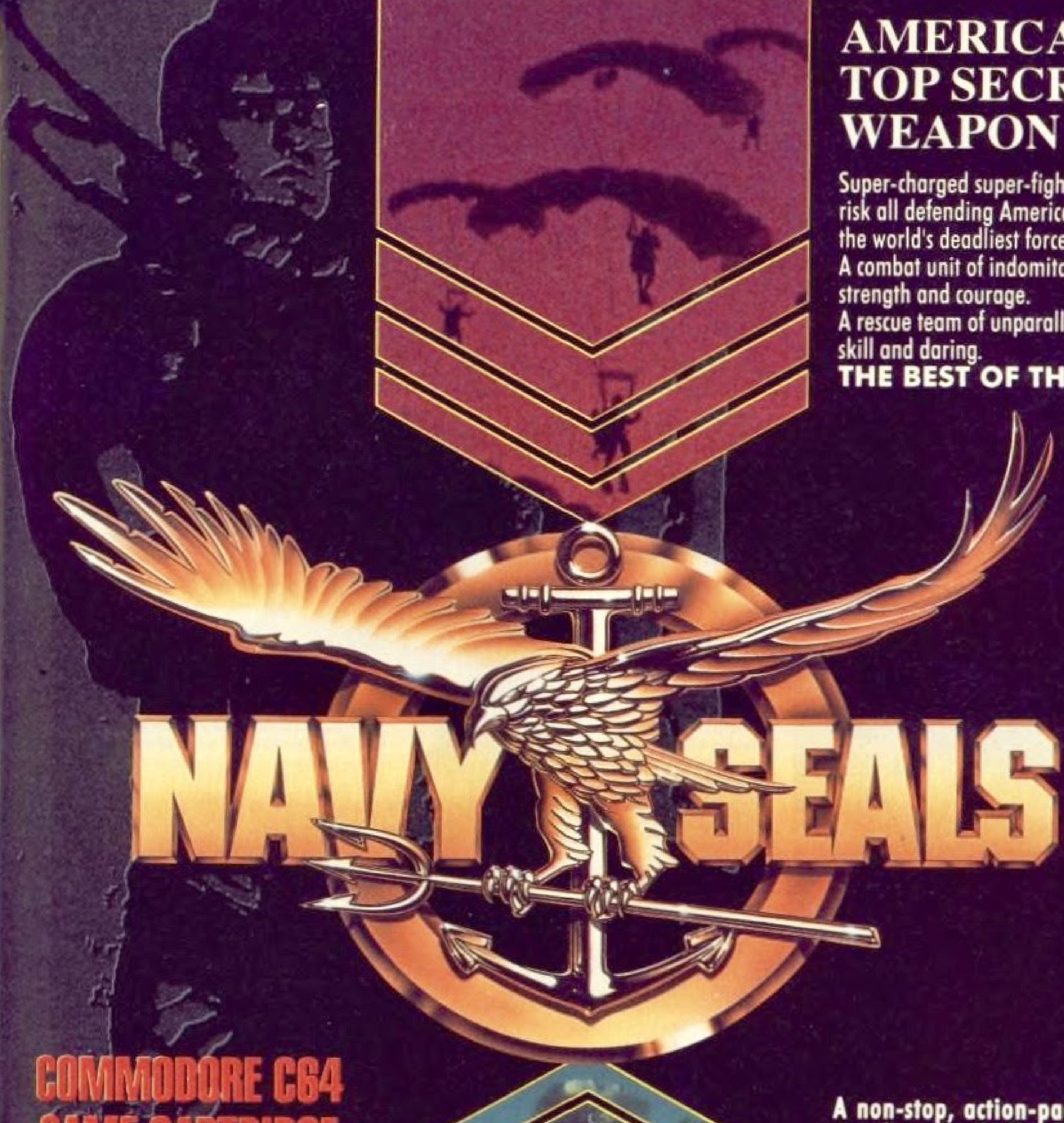
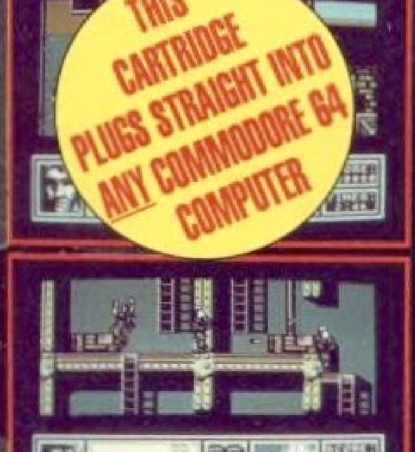


COMMODORE C64 GAME CARTRIDGE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**A non-stop, action-packed arcade style thriller based on the heroic missions of the world's most elite, superbly trained commando unit... the U.S. NAVY SEALS.
You have a number of perilous missions to complete. Out-manoeuver the enemy, destroy hostile missile sites and rescue the hostages.
You begin with the briefing you may end with a victory.. it's the middle ground that hurts!**

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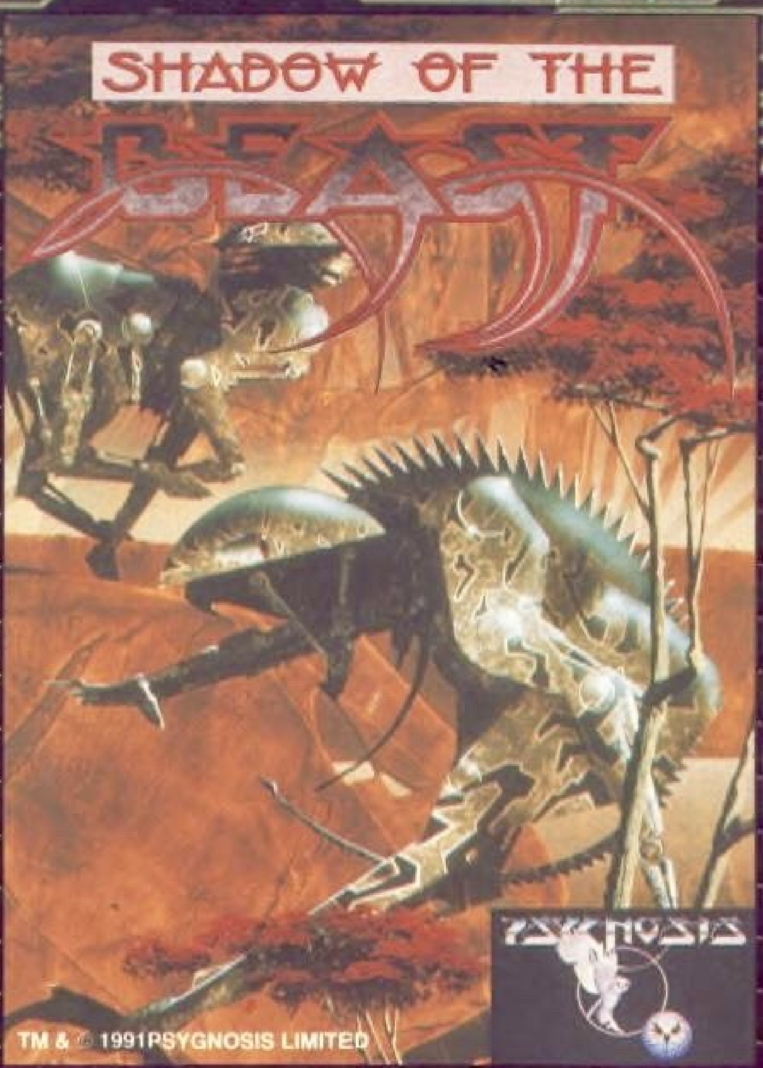

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ZZAP 64 "Amazing graphics... with a superb soundtrack and brilliant backgrounds... completing the game is an immense challenge... The ultimate in entertainment software..."
AMIGA ACTION "On seeing Beast for the first time, I was convinced that this was the best gameI'd seen... Beast scores highly both in graphics and sound departments... adds up to one hell of a well-presented game."

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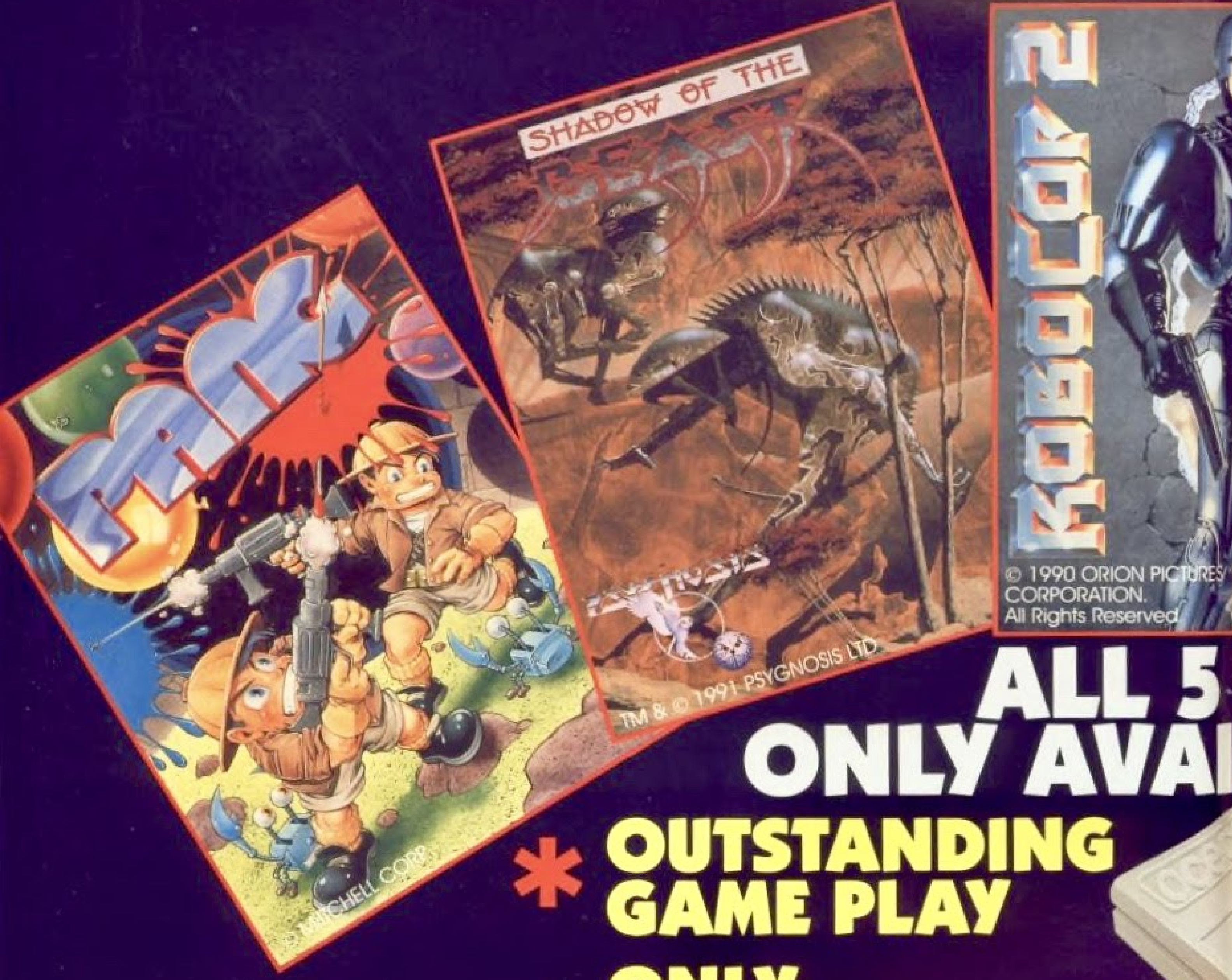
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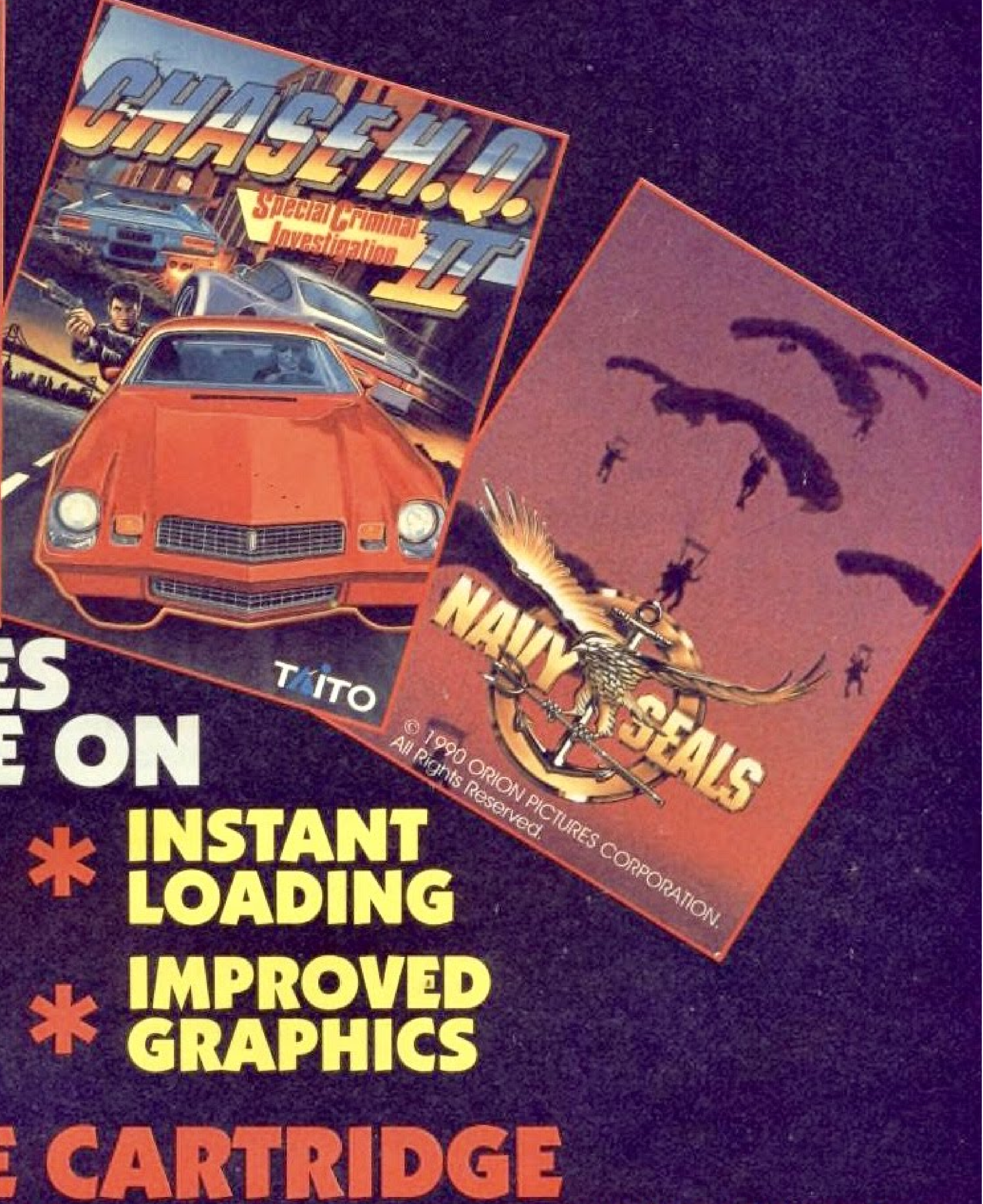
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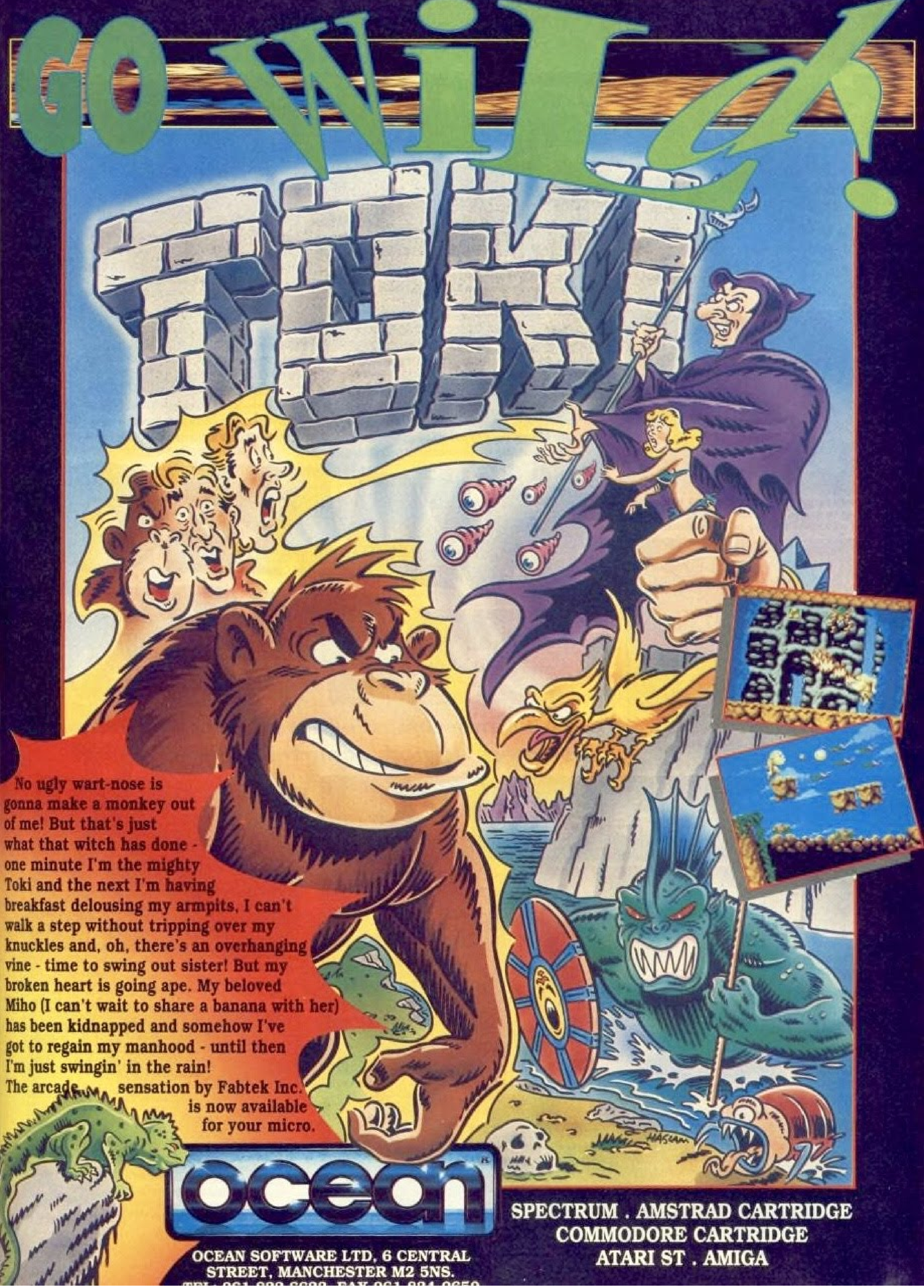

No ugly wart-nose is gonna make a monkey out of me! But that's just what that witch has done - one minute I'm the mighty Toki and the next I'm having breakfast delousing my armpits. I can't walk a step without tripping over my knuckles and, oh, there's an overhanging vine - time to swing out sister! But my broken heart is going ape. My beloved Miho (I can't wait to share a banana with her) has been kidnapped and somehow I've got to regain my manhood - until then I'm just swingin' in the rain!

The arcade sensation by Fabtek Inc. is now available for your micro.

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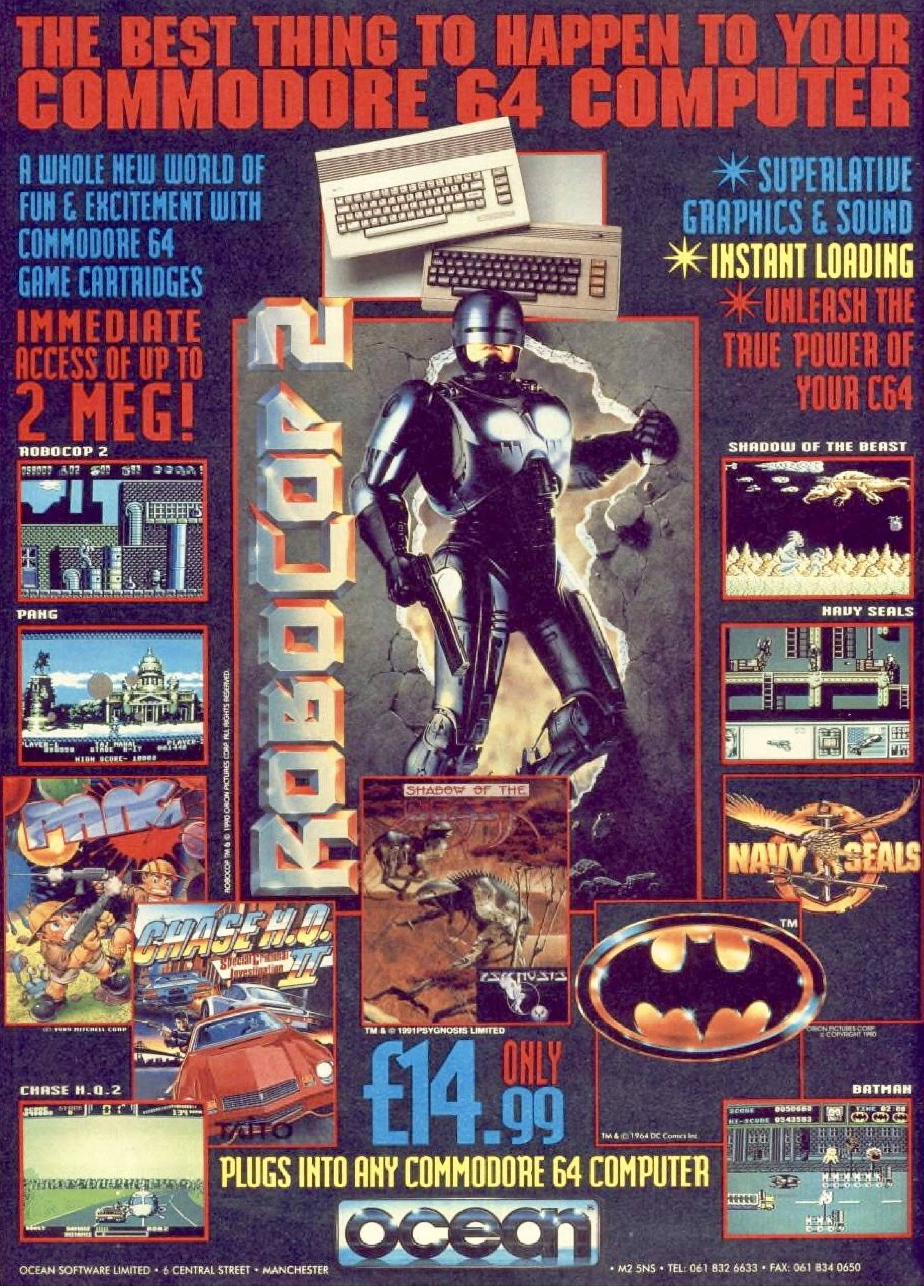

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BATMAN

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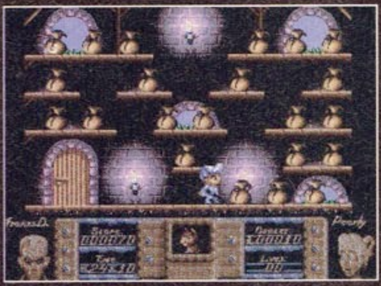

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RRP ~~£25.99~~ show price £4.99

Ninja Remix

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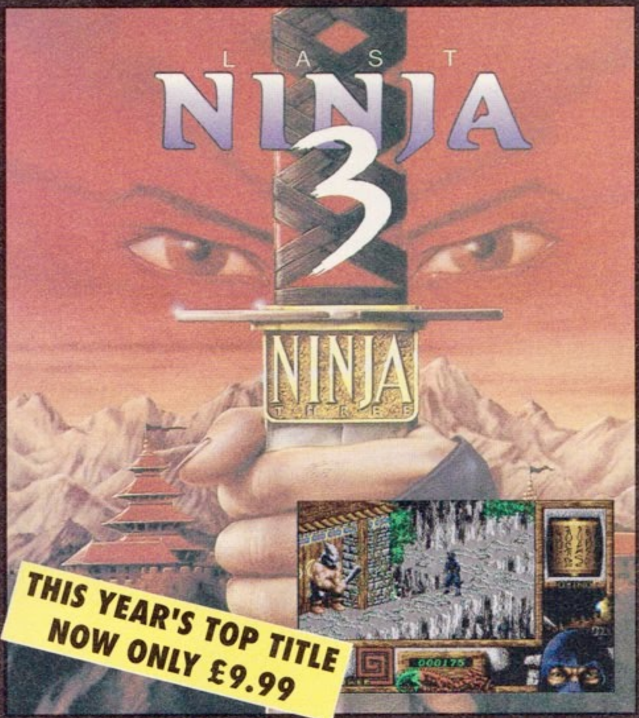
LAST NINJA 3



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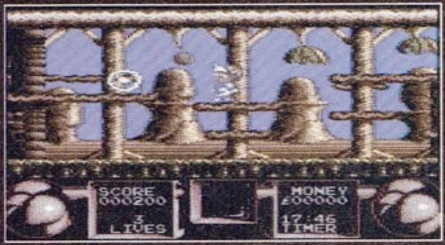

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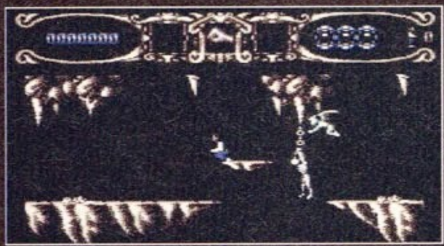

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ALL THAT IS EVIL IS ALL THAT IS MYTH

MYTH
HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Magical tales of intrigue and mystery were spawned thousands of years ago, as the worlds civilisations believed that mythological Gods and demons carved out the way of the world. They were said to have dealt their own hand in the epic game of life and ruled with cast iron law and powerful sorcery.

Something has now gone wrong...
Someone must stop the spread of evil

YOU ARE THE CHOSEN ONE...

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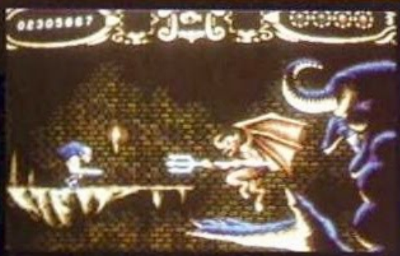
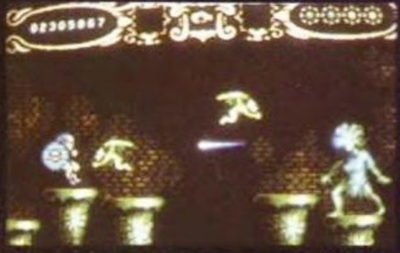
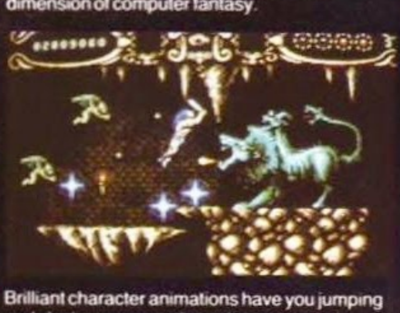


Another in the long line of award winning classics from the System 3 stable, Myth brings the magical mysteries of historic, demonic gods into the very heart of your home.



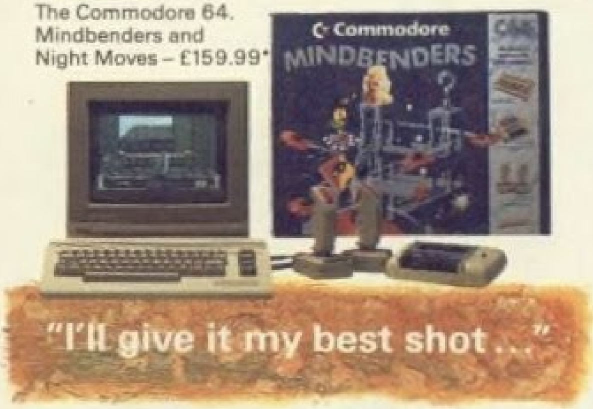
With a truly epic introduction sequence, this superb game will pull you through a new dimension of computer fantasy.



Brilliant character animations have you jumping and slaying your way through a true award winning classic. Having scooped all the major awards on the smaller home computers, Myth looks set to emulate that success on the Amiga and Atari ST.

the 90's' includes 10 free diskettes, mouse mat and introductory video. At just £599.99 it's a small price to help any child throughout their academic life.

And when class is over, there's our new Amiga 500 'Screen Gems' pack which includes Deluxe Paint II and four new challenges, each based on a blockbuster movie; Back to the Future II, Nightbreed, Shadow of the Beast II and the devastating Days of Thunder for only £399.99.



The Commodore 64. Mindbenders and Night Moves – £159.99*

On the subject of fun and games, we present a totally new double pack for the C64, undoubtedly the world's favourite games computer. If brain-stretching tasks are your forte, choose 'Mindbenders' with Confuzion, Split Personalities and Trivial Pursuits. Or if it's pure escapism you prefer, there's 'Night Moves' with the compelling Midnight Resistance, Nightbreed, Secret Agency Sly Spy and Shadow Warriors. The C64 computer comes with data cassette and two joysticks and is outstanding value at £159.99.

This Christmas, we are also proud to unveil the C64 Games System, a system built for one single purpose – having fun.

The C64 Games System is instant enjoyment for all the family and comes complete with annihilator joystick and four fun-filled games. When you've mastered Klax, International Soccer, Flimbo's Quest and Fiendish Freddy's Big Top, you can choose from another hundred. All this for under £100.

Every games cartridge for the C64 Games System is compatible with the C64 computer. And all Commodore machines, together with a complete range of peripherals, are available from any major high street store.

So whichever one of our computers you do choose, it's sure to bring out the best in your family. After all, there's a little bit of Commodore in all of us.

Call 071 873 9800 for details or send the freepost coupon below.

The Commodore 64 Games System – £99.99*

"I knew I could do it."

All prices are inclusive of VAT. *Monitor not included.

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To find out, please complete your details and send them to Commodore, Freepost 38, London W1E 6PA.

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Commodore

X/CF/a

magazine reviews

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BATTLE COMMAND

When we gave this game to *Richard Taylor*, he wondered if it was a game about the Parish Council of a small village near Hastings. We told him that it was a crap joke and ordered him to bally well get on with it!

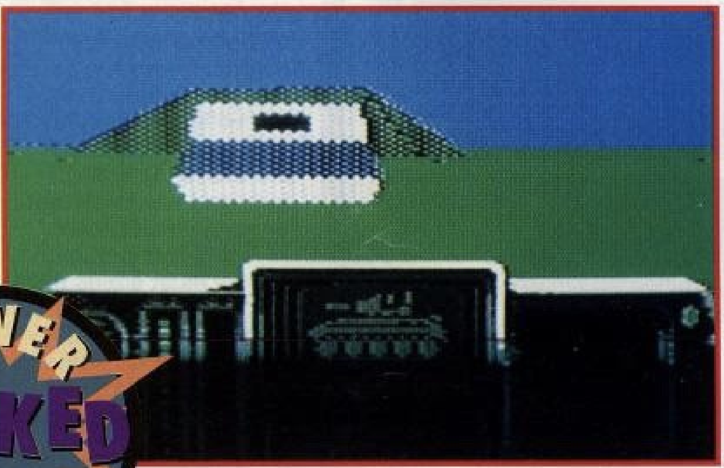
POWER INFO

Supplier:	Ocean
Price:	£14.99 Cart
Availability:	Out now!!!

SIMULATION

I have always liked this type of game, ever since I played Battle Zone in the arcades many dark and stormy years ago. ALthough similar in some ways, no-one has ever tried this kind of thing on the 64 before.

It has solid vector graphics for a start and, don't worry, all the speed is there to make it more playable. Maybe somebody was inspired after seeing Incentive's 3D Construction Kit.



POWER PACKED

To start with, you must arm your tank to the teeth from a fine selection of weaponry kindly offered to you. This ranges from the essential 'get out of my way, asshole' mega-multi-purpose indiscriminate 100mm shell repeater, to the finely-accurate and elegant radar-guided missiles.

These are quite good fun, as you get a 'missile-eye' view, so you can guide it towards the target.

Once you have armed up, it's off to select a mision. These are fundamentally simple; "blow up so-and-so" but when 200 other tanks are trying to blow you up, not to mention gun pods, mines and other nasties, it becomes quite difficult.

These are varied, with ones like "destroy this building" and "disable (ho, ho!) this train" and so on. Plenty to choose from.

I don't think I actually completed a mission - as I said, they are difficult! The initial approach of blow everything up that get's in your way, although great fun, doesn't usually get the mission completed.

A more tactical method is required. It's so tempting to waste all you ammo on a convoy of supply vehicles, boats and other tanks, though.

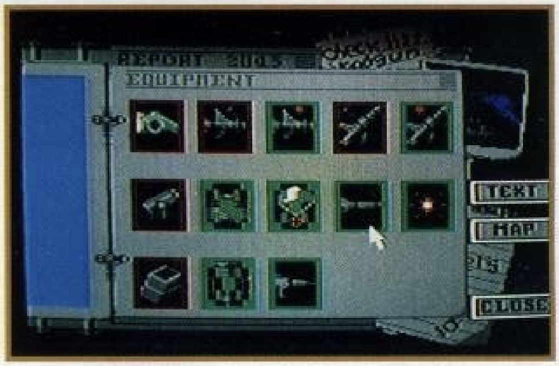
For your aid, a map of the area can be displayed at any time, with all relevant targets highlighted.

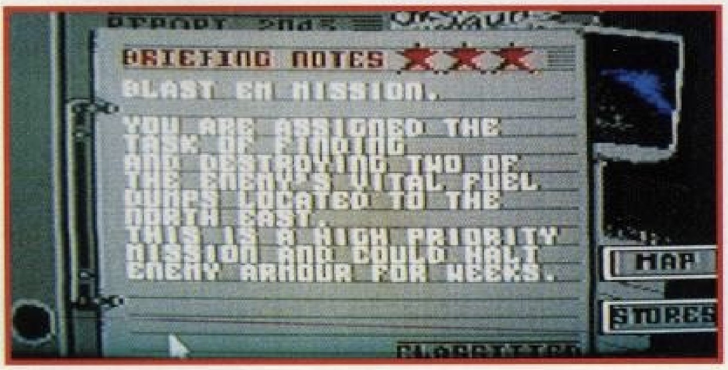
On the whole, this is real joystick-wrenching fun but is, unfortunately, let down by a few design flaws. For instance, sometimes you die without really knowing why, which can be annoying.

This Christmas looks like being a good one for 64 gamers, with some very impressive releases from Ocean. This, along with Smash TV, would really make my Christmas morning (as would four crates of Holsten Pils and half a metric tonne of peanuts). ✪

THE CP GUIDE ON HOW TO CAMOUFLAGE YOURSELF:

Take one jar of Marmite and smear it over your face. Then pick various pieces of foliage from your garden and wear them in your hair. Now you'll be able to walk unnoticed, blending in with the scenery!





BRIEFING NOTES ★★★

BLAST EM MISSION.

YOU ARE ASSIGNED THE
TASK OF FINDING
AND DESTROYING TWO OF
THE ENEMY'S VITAL FUEL
DUMPS LOCATED TO THE
NORTH EAST.
THIS IS A HIGH PRIORITY
MISSION AND COULD HALT
ENEMY ARMOUR FOR WEEKS.

CRITICAL FACTOR

GRAPHICS 9

SONICS 9

HALF-LIFE 8

FIX FACTOR 8

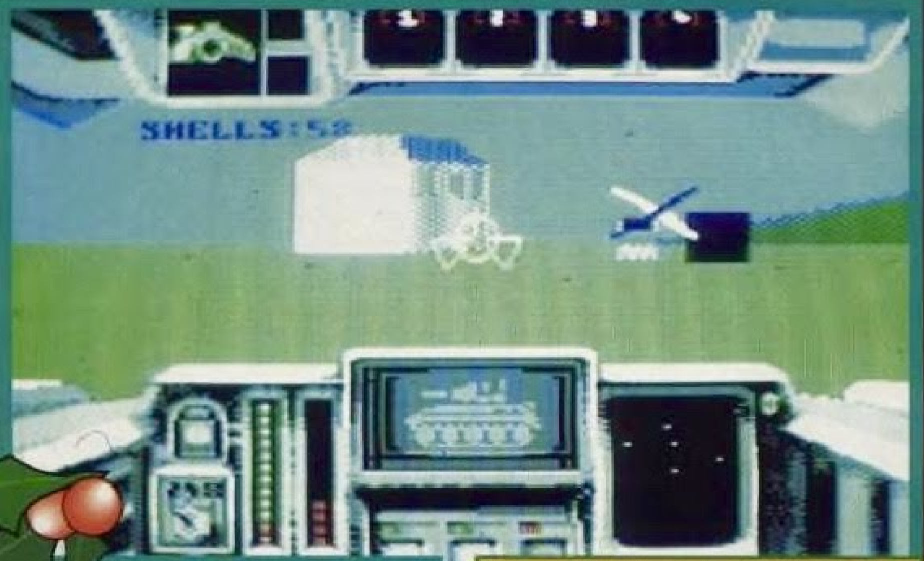
DANGER RATING 90%

Amiga Battle Command Sizzled well over a year ago, an astonishing mix of fast 3-D action and semi-realistic tactics. A C64 conversion appeared impossible, but Realtime Games have worked miracles by a combination of state-of-the-art code and continual accessing of cartridge memory. Robin Hogg dons goggles and scarf to battle-test gameplay.

BATTLE C

Ocean £14.99 cartridge

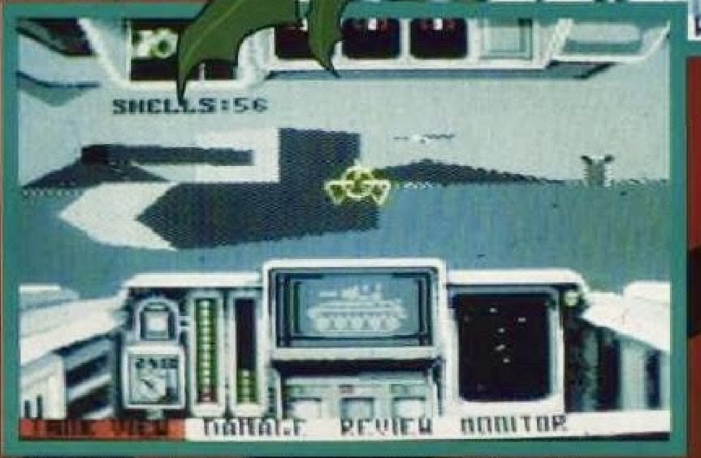
• Incoming! An enemy's star-shaped shell rockets in for a direct hit! Just behind it one of your own square black rounds is heading toward the white enemy tank.



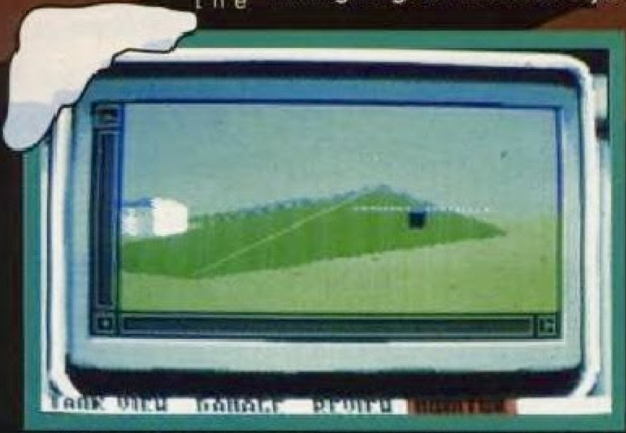
The Ultra War has dragged on to the point where the North and South forces face stalemate — mass attacks result only in mass slaughter. Into this standoff situation come the Mauler supertanks, designed to penetrate behind enemy lines, wreak havoc and put an end to the conflict. The Maulers are solo killers, operating completely on their own after being dropped by Stealth Heli-Carriers.

The Amiga battle has been reduced to seven missions for the C64 (plus a final secret mission when you complete all the others), but given that the enemy forces have now been substantially upgraded in toughness, the overall campaign remains considerable. You can attempt the seven main missions in any order and can run through the briefings before selecting; there's a reconnaissance picture of the battlezone (complete with drop-off/pick-up points) as well as an awesome display of the Mauler weapons available.

Choosing which weapons to use is absolutely critical and there's a superb arming screen where the various systems are shown rotating in glorious solid 3-D. The most important is



• The tanks look good and move unbelievably quickly, making for genuine arcade-style action.

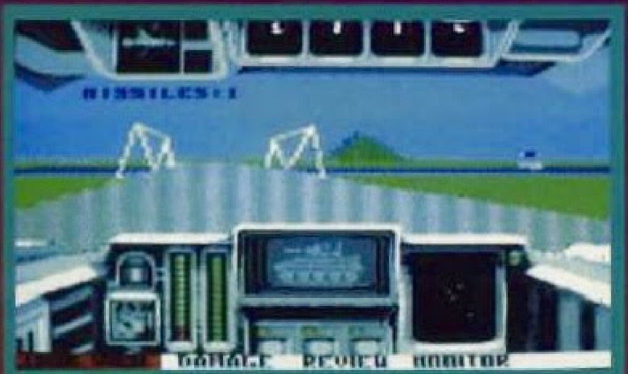


• A one way trip to oblivion — riding along behind a missile in the remote control option.

It's taken a long time, but at last we've got a C64 cart which actually exploits the technology for something more ambitious than faster loading. According to Ocean the game is continually pulling code off the cart, but there's no pauses — except when it's a massive block, such as a map screen. Battle Command shows how carts can dramatically improve C64 performance and the blindingly fast 3-D is as impressive as any we've seen. But what about Battle the game,? Well, as with the original it's tough and although the menus work brilliantly, it still takes some getting used to. Although you can get into the action as soon as you load the game, dying comes all too easily until you stop to work out how things are working: which weapons and defences to use, what approach to the target is best. Once this is done you can really get to grips with this stunning program.

Tank encounters can admittedly resemble Battlezone more than anything else — lots of fast rotation searching for lock-on — but the range of weapons, especially the superb missile-eye view option, more than compensate. Then there's the various enemy installations to find, helicopters to shoot down and night fights to survive. Eight missions aren't a huge amount, but at £15 this is unmissable and I wait in expectation for more games like it.

OMMAND



● This wire-frame bridge looks pretty, but crossing it leaves you little room to manoeuvre.

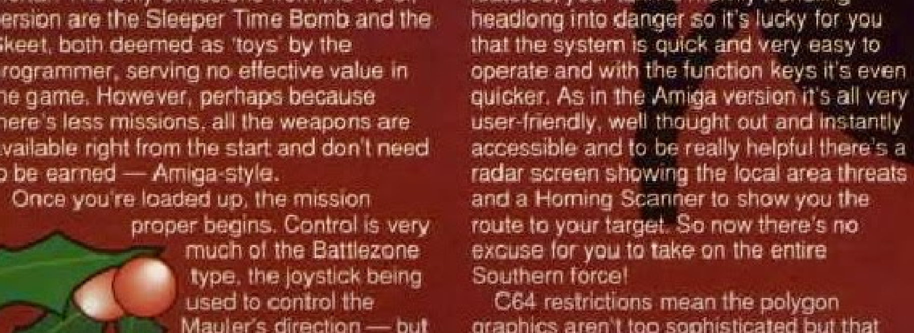
undoubtedly the Pulveriser cannon but there's a whole host of radar and IR missiles to choose from alongside the more specialised weapons such as SLAM anti-missile laser, Phantasm Chaff Dispenser, wire-guided missiles and a heavy duty Mortar. The only omissions from the 16-bit version are the Sleeper Time Bomb and the Skeet, both deemed as 'toys' by the programmer, serving no effective value in the game. However, perhaps because there's less missions, all the weapons are available right from the start and don't need to be earned — Amiga-style.

Once you're loaded up, the mission proper begins. Control is very much of the Battlezone type, the joystick being used to control the Mauler's direction — but at the press of the GS joystick's second fire button (or simply the space bar) an arrow pointer appears, allowing you to activate the tank's sytems and weapons. Night-sights, binoculars and a rear-view camera are available, depending on the mission, and by clicking on the four weapon pods you can swap firepower. If need be you can call up (via the GS fire button or the C64's function keys) the battlezone map, damage screen and the special binoculars view which also offers a superb missile-eye view — good on the Amiga, stunning on the C64!

Oh, by the way, while you're fiddling around with the systems and game features, your tank is merrily trundling headlong into danger so it's lucky for you that the system is quick and very easy to operate and with the function keys it's even quicker. As in the Amiga version it's all very user-friendly, well thought out and instantly accessible and to be really helpful there's a radar screen showing the local area threats and a Homing Scanner to show you the route to your target. So now there's no excuse for you to take on the entire Southern force!

C64 restrictions mean the polygon graphics aren't too sophisticated but that doesn't mean there aren't some great graphics in there. The airfield with the jets by the runway, the missile launchers and bridges are all worth a look, but just be prepared to see a good few square buildings on your travels!

So what do you actually get for 128K? Well, it was disappointing to find out that there's only 8 missions in the C64 version and that the tanks aren't so clever or numerous in types (the spotter planes are still in there if it's any consolation) but one thing it's got going for it is that it's FAST, the playability harking back to the joyous days of Battlezone but this time the action has a purpose! It's good then to see that the mission variety puts all manner of skills and weaponry to the the test: the Hostage mission requires stealthy tactics, the Missile Battery is a race against time where Dragonfly Guided Missiles come in handy, and not forgetting the all-out blast of the final, secret mission. Great stuff, and a great price too!


MISSILES:5
TANK VIEW DAMAGE REVIEW MONITOR
258

● An enemy aircraft circles above the mountains, guiding enemy tanks towards you. Use an AA missile to bring it down.

Credits

Game Design: Realtime Games
Programming, Graphics, Sound Effects: Steve Cashil
Music: Jonathan Dunn

PRESENTATION 92%

Impressive graphically and in variety, superb arming up screen together with Password system for restoring game position. All screens are easy to activate and use. Great cockpit display.

GRAPHICS 89%

Surprisingly fast-moving mix of vector and solid polygon graphics with some remarkably detailed objects to be seen. Excellent missile-eye sequence.

SOUND 67%

Great title tune but let down by limited in-game spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 90%

The surface appeal of Battlezone draws you in but it offers much, much more.

LASTABILITY 88%

Only seven levels but the variety of mission demands will keep you at it and then there's Mission 8 to tackle after all of the others.

OVERALL 90%

Technically stunning, extremely playable heavy metal arcade action!

BATTLE COMMAND

CART GAME

Fighting in tank battles is a funny old business. One minute you're happily rolling over everything in sight and re-arranging the landscape with the aid of a stupidly large gun. The next – *Kaboom!* – some blighter lands a corker right on your turret and it's a one way ticket to the Pearly Gates.

The solution to this desperately short career path is to get your mitts on the largest, meanest, baddest hunk of tank in the world, become the envy of the neighbourhood and then blow the whole neighbourhood to the heavens, good and proper.

That, I'm pleased to say, is what *Battle Command* is all about. The game provides you with a vehicle, which, to be honest, isn't so much a tank as a very big gun on caterpillar tracks. And, if that's not enough to have all warmongers tingling in anticipation, there's also a fine selection of bombs, bullets, missiles and other projectiles which would have old Saddam thinking Christmas had come early.

Battle Command offers you the opportunity to kit-up with all these goodies, pick a mission, and get cracking. Missions usually involve destroying things which a) are trying to destroy you, and b) just happen to be in the way. There's usually a plot like saving an important scientist, or 'disabling' (great word that) transport vehicles, but this doesn't get in the way of the action..

These missions are extremely difficult to complete but don't be disheartened. Once you've learned how to make the best use of that tank, there's plenty of gameplay in here just killing off enemies.

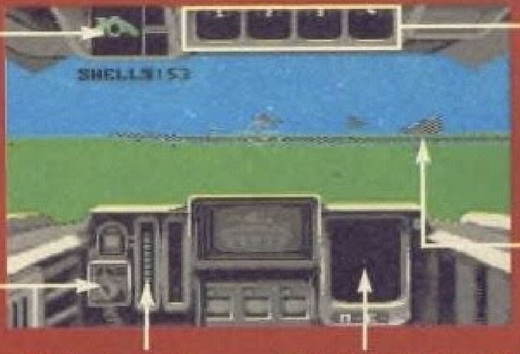
Battle Command works brilliantly because, on a very simple level, it's a well crafted solid-3D shoot-'em-up come driving game with lots to keep you busy. On a more sophisticated level, it's quite a tricky tactical affair in which you must decide which weapons best fit which mission and there's a fair amount of damage limitation and navigation to be taken into account.

I played this for hours on end without completing a single mission, but heck, I sure trashed one hell of a lot of tanks, supply vehicles, bunkers, boats and houses in the attempt. Not bad, I thought.

Battle Command is bursting with manic joystick action yet it still manages to squeeze in something for those of you who like to think before you fire. It looks a treat and sounds sufficiently convincing. Your abrupt demise is the biggest downer. If you're killed, the game chucks you into the same (rather dull) termination screen every time. It doesn't deliver any atmosphere. I would have enjoyed knowing just why I kept getting killed. But then, real tank drivers don't have the privilege of de-briefing sessions after they've been blown into a gooey paste, either. This is glorious fun which will, justifiably I think, make Ocean quite proud.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Tanks for the memory



You can only use one weapn at a time, but the tank can carry up to four. Most of the time you'll be sporting a straight no nonsense gun

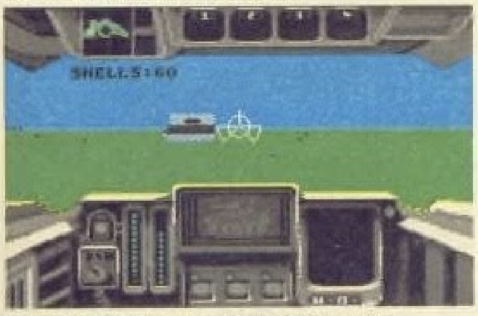
These windows indicate the weapons you have on board. The tank can only carry 1,000lbs' worth, so choose well

Erm, actually, this bit doesn't seem to do much except look vaguely interesting

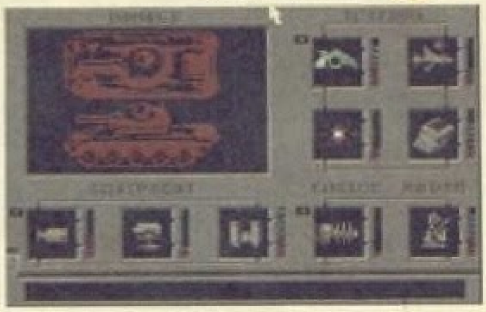
The display is pretty enough, and objects can be picked out at a distance. But don't go bumping into other tanks and buildings

Watch your speed. Your pace deteriorates as you take knocks from the enemy

This scanner keeps a check on enemy positions and flight paths of any shells



The combat zone is chock-a-bloc with enemy tanks. It's best to welcome them with a taste of your implausibly large gun



You can access info screens at any time during combat, just to keep a check on weapons supplies, or damage received

Game	***Battle Command***
Publisher	***Ocean***
Cartridge	***£14.99***
Release	***December***
Contact	***061 832 6633***

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Very short missions at first
- It's a little shy on the post-battle analysis but you get the message

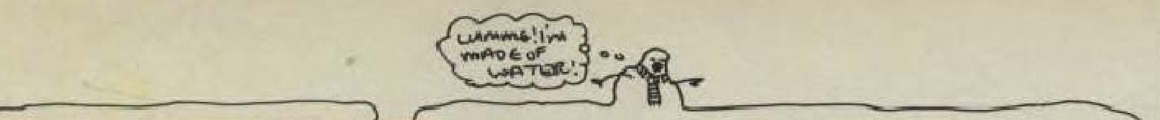
100

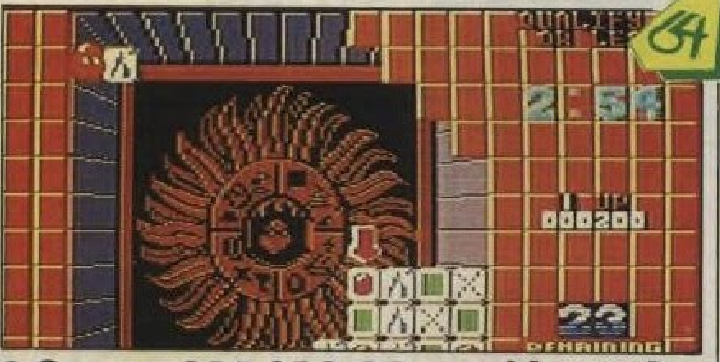
88%

- **Action-packed gameplay will grip you for hours**
- **Lovely graphics to fight your way through**
- **Plenty of options in the weapons department, so it's experimentation time!**
- **Good selection of missions to accomplish**
- **Just enough strategy to make it more than yet another shoot-'em-up**
- **Extremely accurate vehicle movement**
- **Juicy sound effects**
- **Atmospheric documentation to get you in the mood**

...AND THE UPPERS

0

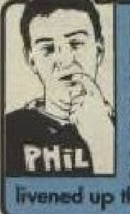

WAHHH!! I'M MADE OF WATER!



● Ocean, C64 £19.99 cartridge only

PLOTTING

After a two month gap C64 *Plotting* follows the Amiga game onto the world stage (and hopefully this time Film Planning won't get it confused with *Future Basketball*!). You control a tile-throwing potato who starts off with a block of tiles which must be reduced to a certain number to complete the level. You can fire tiles from the side, or vertically by bouncing them off the steps at the top. You destroy tiles by throwing an identical design tile at them — skilful players arrange their hits to create long lines of identical tiles which give bonus points when hit. If the tile thrown out after a hit won't match any of those available one of three 'miss' tiles are used up. Further miss tiles are awarded at set point scores as the levels become more complex with uneven steps and pipes.



I'm a bit disappointed with this conversion, not that the game was that good on the Amiga. With the lack of the competitive two-player mode and construction kit, all you're left with is a very simplistic puzzle game which soon gets repetitive with its non-random level layouts. And sadly no real use of the cartridge format is made — a few good interlevel presentation screens might have livened up the dull proceedings.

The attractive title page comes up a second after turning on but the intro demo is shorter than the Amiga's. Also, the designer and two-player options have been cut (the latter probably because a split-screen would make individual tiles too small to work on the C64). But the core game remains, looking particularly nice with attractively done backdrops and tiles. The basic idea is shaping the block of tiles to avoid being stuck with an unusable tile, and it works well enough for puzzle-maniacs.

PRESENTATION 65%
Zero-fuss fun of slamming in cart, great title screen, nice demo but no two-player or designer options.

GRAPHICS 70%
Very attractive backdrops and tiles are superior to most puzzle games.

SOUND 50%
The jolly in-game tune is okay.

HOOKABILITY 74%
Easy to get into, although some of the finer gameplay points can be puzzling until you've read the instructions.

LASTABILITY 63%
Lots of progressively tougher levels, but it can get repetitive redoing earlier levels.

OVERALL 68%

A fun, but unremarkable puzzle game.

● Domark/Tengen, C64 £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk

BADLANDS

A few years back, I thought the *Super Sprint* coin-op was outdated rubbish but it was converted to the Commodore all the same. *Badlands* is really no better; different graphics and one or two new features. Gameplay's just a matter of steering left and right to negotiate curves and dodge obstacles — hardly likely to tax the brain cells and reflexes of today's gamers. Aesthetics of the conversion are weak too: crude, boring backgrounds and grating music and engine noises. Bearing in mind Domark's success with previous Tengen coin-ops, *Badlands* is a vast disappointment.

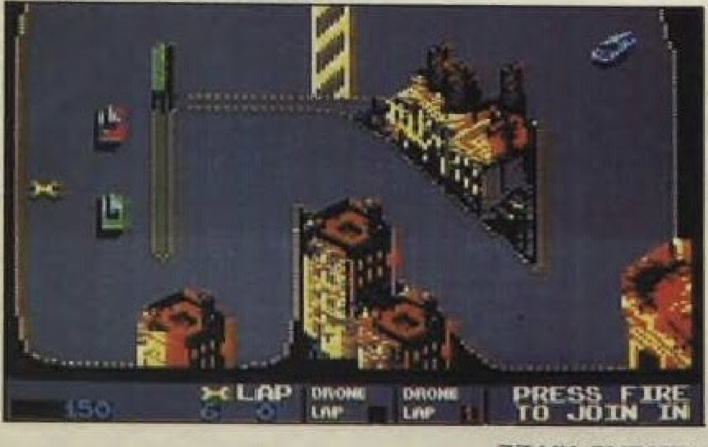
After a nuclear war, life goes on — in the motor racing world at least. Violent races continue on tracks in a zone known as the Badlands. Cars are armoured and armed and losers pay with their lives.

Eight single-screen, plan-view tracks are littered with hazards such as oil patches and spikes. One or two players compete against computer controlled opposition in four-lap races. If a car is destroyed, a helicopter lowers a replacement onto the track, wasting precious time — only the winner goes on to the next race.

Spanners lying on the track can be collected and used in the interlevel shop to buy shields, higher acceleration, missiles etc.

Badlands suffers from coming after the brilliant *Iron Man* conversion. The cars are just that bit too large for courses, making overtaking difficult and it's frustratingly easy to crash as you try to barge through. The pace and rough and tumble action of *Iron Man* is missing, but the weapons are a nice addition. Also the two-player mode works well enough — Phil and I had some fun co-operating against the computer player. If you liked the coin-op this isn't bad.

★ *Super Sprint* gets guns in *Badlands*.



Amiga update
Should be out soon, priced £24.99.

PRESENTATION 75%
One or two players, continue-plays, winner's podium and shop screens.

GRAPHICS 49%
Dull, simplistic backgrounds and plain car sprites.

SOUND 38%
Irritating title music, droning engine noises and a few squeaks.

HOOKABILITY 64%
Gameplay and control method are very easily grasped.

LASTABILITY 39%
Eight tracks and various car improvements aren't enough to disguise highly repetitive gameplay.

OVERALL 41%

A lacklustre conversion of a mediocre coin-op.

SHADO
THE BE

One of the most impressive games ever to appear on the Amiga has finally come to the C64, from Psygnosis via Ocean's 8-bit conversion. Unbelievable graphics and sound have been packed onto this new cartridge but the gameplay is just like the original and that has our reviewer worried...

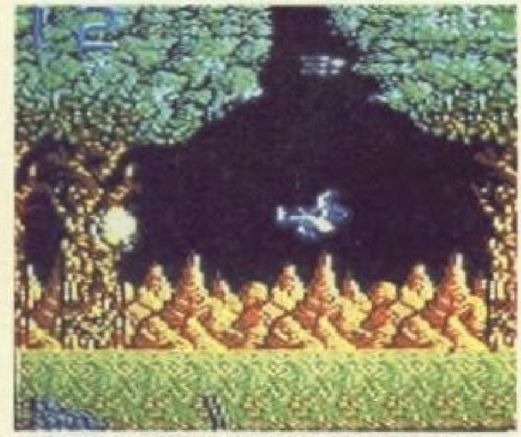
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
Yum Yum!
CART GAME

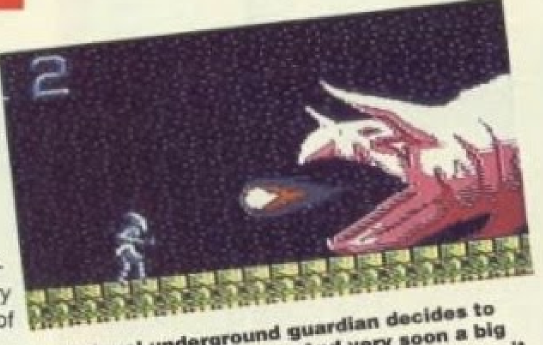
Prepare yourself for a tale of woe. As a youngster, the hero of our fable was stolen from his parents and forced to live in slavery in the temple of Necropolis, home of the Beast Lord. The infant fell victim to the Mages' dark arts – years of vile potions and brainwashing transformed the child into a lithe and powerful half-human with no emotions – necessary preparation for his task ahead: the herding of humans for sacrifice to the Beast Lord.

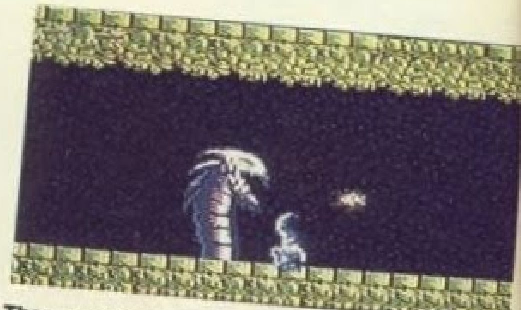
One day, an old man catches his eye. A sliver of recognition pierces the creature's mind... it is his father. Suddenly the years of conditioning peel away. Ancient memories come flooding back and the half-human, saddened and enraged by his new-found truth, turns against his oppressors and decides to destroy the Beast Lord. Gosh!

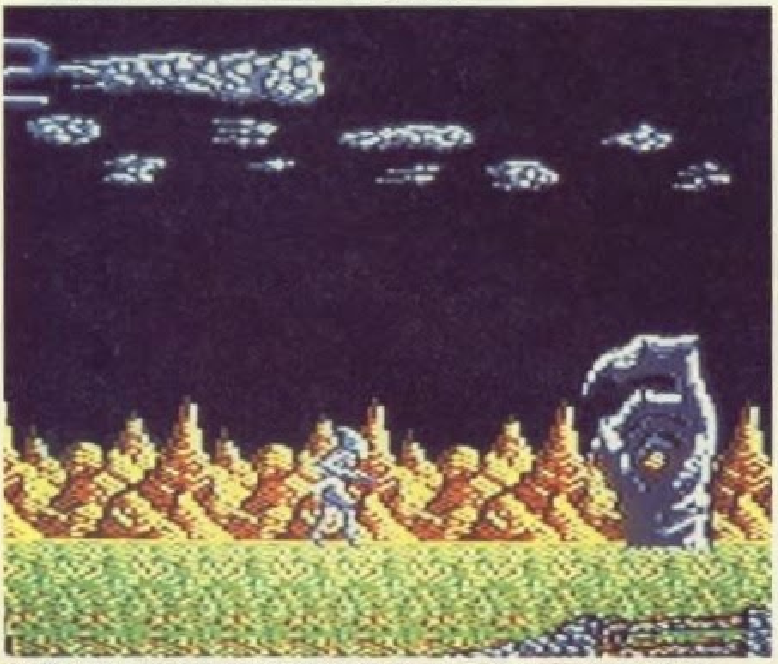
En route to the big show-down with ol' Lordy himself, the quest takes our half-human hero through forests, into the depths of subterranean caverns and on to the final assault in the labyrinthine interior of the Beast Lord's domain – an awesome castle.

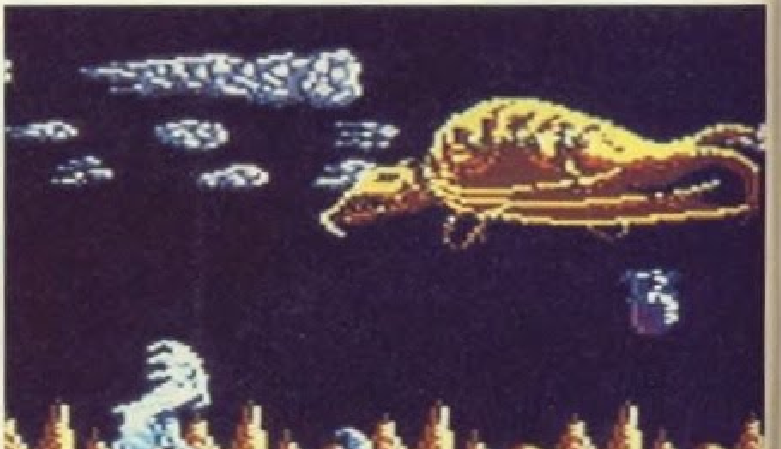
This visual masterpiece starts in the great outdoors where the creature has to traverse

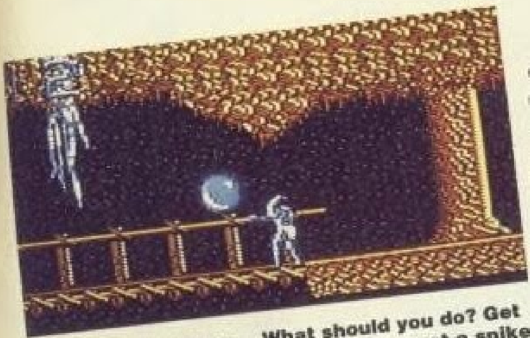

A nice action shot of your half-human's flying kick. It's a pity he didn't manage to hit anything in the process but there you go...


A mid-level underground guardian decides to make your life miserable. And very soon a big spike will come and get you unless you move it


These snakey beasts pop up out of the ground just when you aren't looking. Duck their missiles and then bash them in the belly


Another pop-up monster prepares to do our hero some serious harm. Gripping stuff, eh? Well it will be if you let the poor devil get too close. Take it as read that these guys have insatiable appetites


En route to the Beast Lord's castle, things really start to hot up. Here you have to avoid the dragon-bird's droppings while fending off the nasty advances of that creature behind!



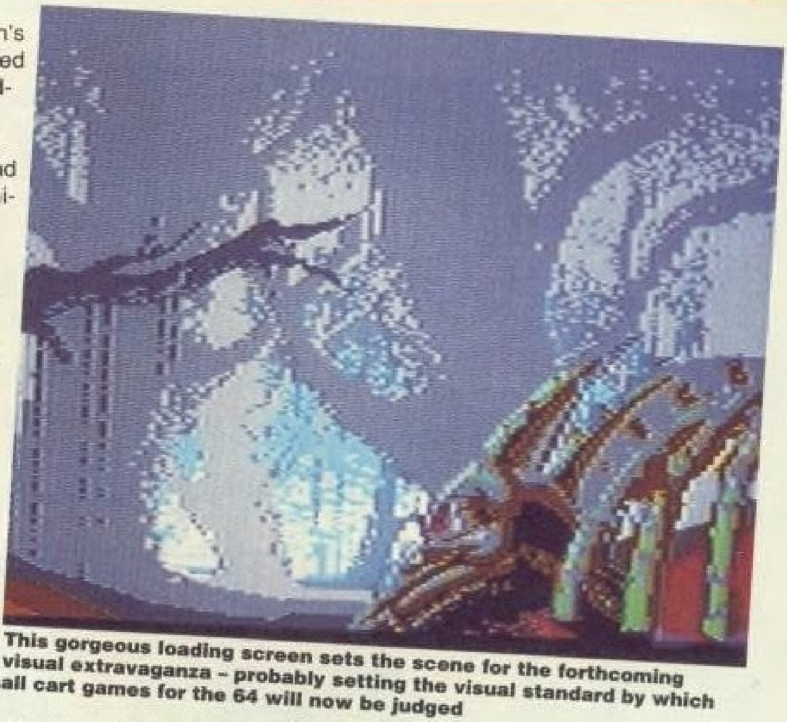
Decisions, decisions... What should you do? Get duffed up by the big blue beastie – or get a spike rammed through the top of your skull?

OF AST

the landscape, running from left to right past trees and greenery to reach the entrance to the first underground level. The scrolling on this section has to be seen to be believed – eleven layers of parallax (including the clouds) with full-screen trees gliding smoothly past (guaranteed to make ST users sick with envy!).

The Beast Lord's minions (further creations of the Mages' experiments) are out to stop this attempt on their leader's life and pop up out of the ground, fly out of the sky and bounce into view. Contact with any of these drains the half-human's energy. Care is needed – no blundering headlong into danger (although at first this is the only way to find out where the abominations appear).

Once their locations are learned, our hero-creature can wait for them and give them a kick in the tentacles, a swift punch in the mid-section or a flying kick to the head. With only these three moves, combat's a bit limited, but halfy's fast and responsive to control.



This gorgeous loading screen sets the scene for the forthcoming visual extravaganza – probably setting the visual standard by which all cart games for the 64 will now be judged

Below ground, a fair amount of exploring is in order to find keys for access to later sections and for the weapons needed to destroy the guardians that await – and what guardians they are! As well as mid-level monsters, there are some hu-u-uge end-of-level jobbies. First on the menu is the Rock monster, a grey creature who fills the screen. If you haven't picked up some serious firepower by now it's a short battle, one touch and you're dead meat. And that's another drawback – you only have one life. Once that energy level zeros out, it's back to the square one (well... screen one). Mind you, this doesn't prove half as painful as if it were a disk or tape multiload!

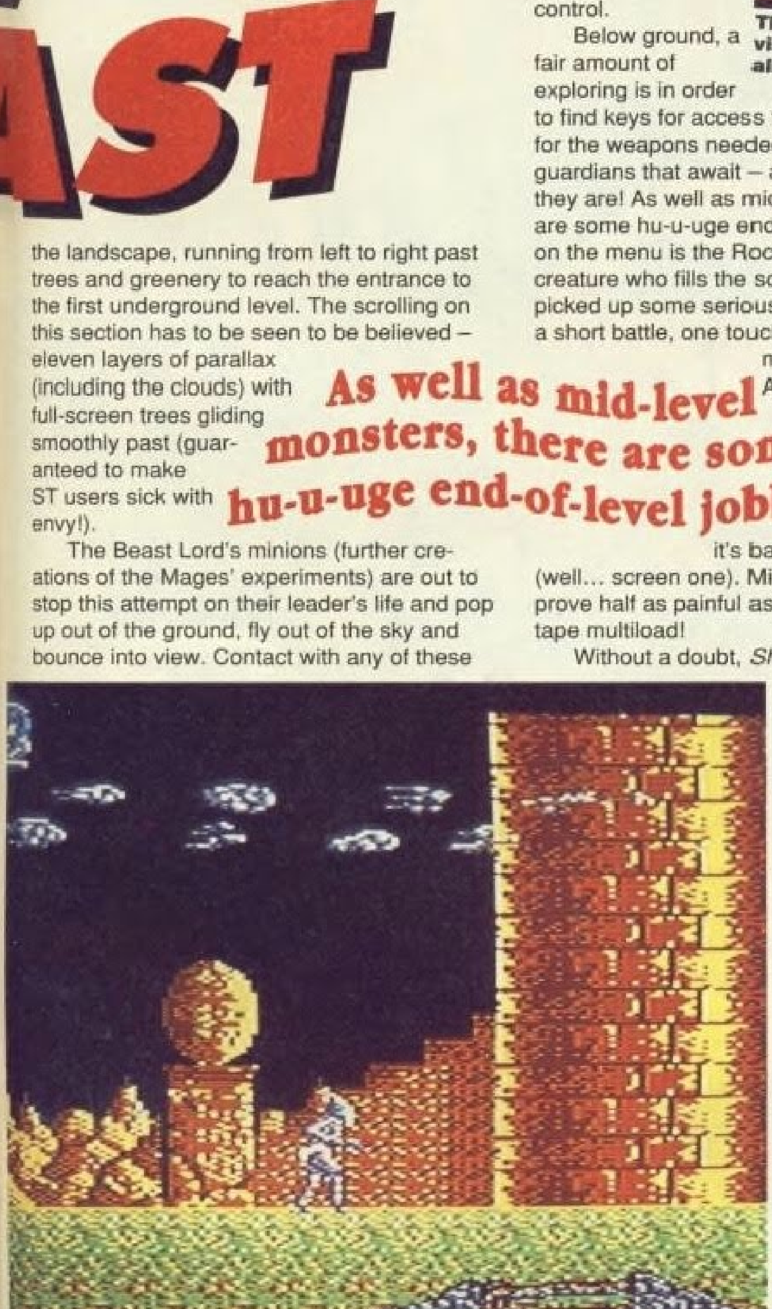
> **As well as mid-level monsters, there are some hu-u-uge end-of-level jobbies**

Without a doubt, *Shadow Of The Beast* is a stunning demo of what's possible on the 'humble' C64. Poor old SID is working overtime, pumping out some moody tunes, while the number of huge characters plus the eye-popping parallax makes *Beast* one of the most visually appealing 64 games ever, following in the tradition started by the Amiga version.

However, the conversion is a little too accurate – instead of listening to the many reviews of the Amiga *Beast* which argued 'nice graphics, shame about the gameplay', the programmers have ensured that the C64 *Beast* is much the same. It's merely a matter of mapping your route, finding the right order to collect things in and being prepared for when the creatures appear.

It shouldn't take hardened gamers long to complete but the journey is long and arduous and there's plenty of action to get your teeth into. There won't be too many disappointed buyers.

STEVE



The exterior of the Beast Lord's castle scrolls impressively into view. You know, it's not too late to turn around, go home and put your feet up... Chicken...

Game	**Shadow of the Beast**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Gameplay is a little too repetitive, and the action too sporadic
- Main sprite is a tad plain
- Limited combat moves and the predictable monster attacks don't make the quest overly exciting

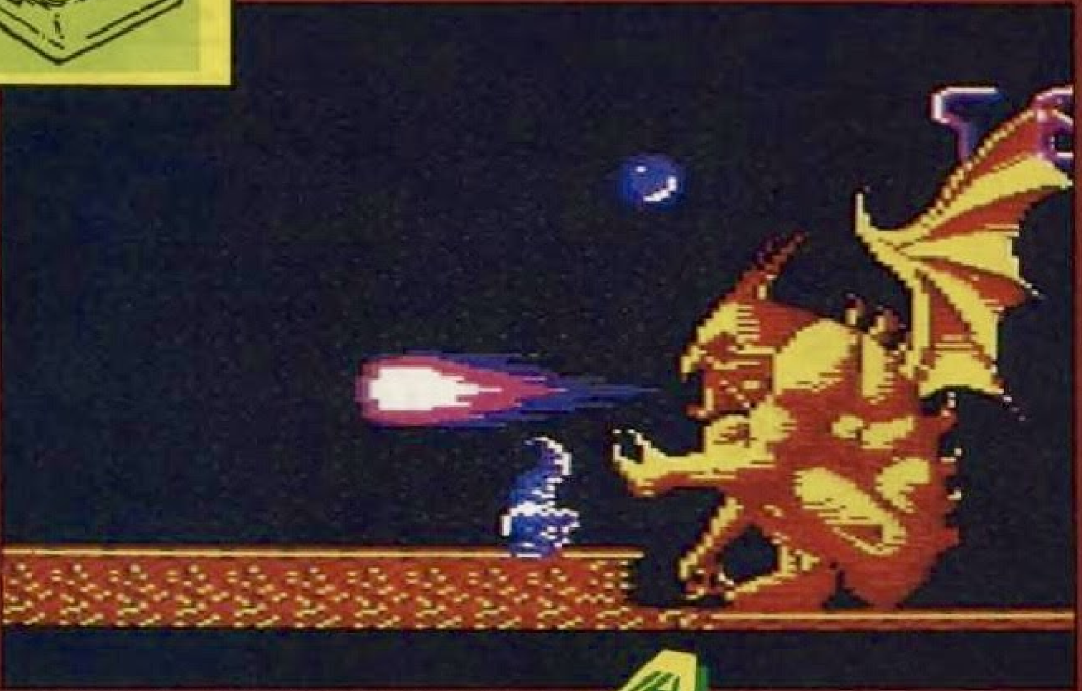
100

70%

0

- **Eye-bulging graphics with amazing scrolling and some of the biggest guardians you'll meet on a 64!**
- **Moody tunes keep the ears interested as well as the eyes**
- **Exploration is made more inviting by the promise of visual treats in store**
- **The inclusion of a few mazey levels and items to collect helps to pep up the variety**
- **The challenge is long and difficult – you won't go far without mapping and preparation**

...AND THE UPPERS



★ No, it's actually a bomb which the huge dragon's dropping!

SHADOW OF THE BEAST

Psygnosis, C64
£19.99
cartridge only

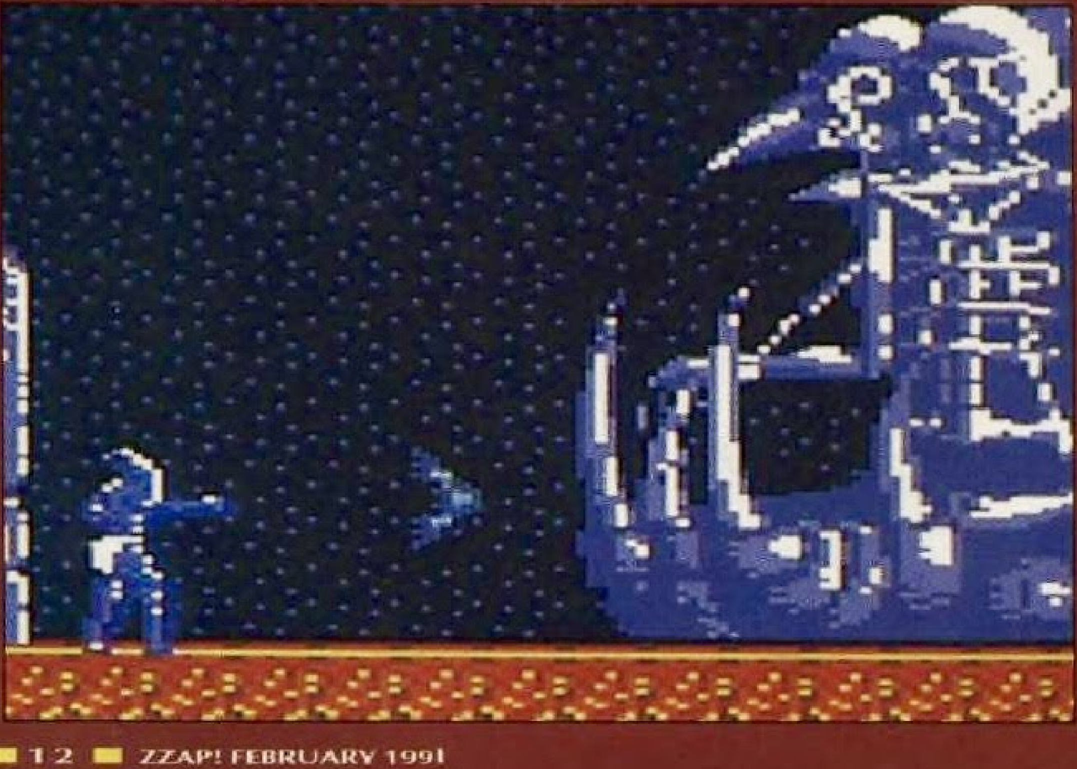
It's always unwise to judge by appearances. *Shadow*'s goat-headed hero may not be a picture to look at, but once he was an innocent human baby whose only sin was to fall prey to the minions of the evil Beast Lord. Deep within the blood-stained Necropolis temple the infant was turned into a monster, crossed with a goat to produce the perfect warrior-messenger. For many years this tortured being has served the Beast Lord with his human past forgotten. Only now has the delusion been torn away, by the brutal murder of his parents on the temple's sacrificial stone...

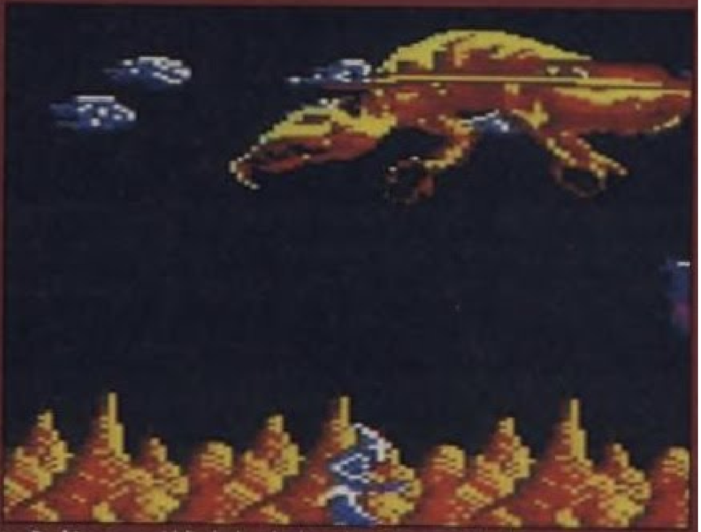
Your quest is simply vengeance. Using the superhuman powers the Beast Lord's mages have endowed you with, you must take on an

Shadow Of The Beast plays amazingly well on the C64. There's more loading than on the Amiga, usually accompanied by a paragraph of atmospheric text, but since it takes only about a second the flow of the game isn't interrupted. On the Amiga if you accidentally went backward, triggering a load, it was teeth-grinding time waiting for the disk — with the C64 it's hardly noticeable. This makes for a really fast-playing arcade adventure. There's not much thought required, just map out the admittedly vast sections, flick a couple of switches and grab a few objects, but the sheer variety of enemy creatures is stunning. Everything from a lethal slug to gigantic, bomb-dropping dragon are waiting to snatch away your lives. There's just so many creatures, all with their own attack patterns, which make it so addictive. DMA Designs have used their *Blood Money* routines to good effect, with the Amiga's showpiece stuff — big animated hands, impaling tusks and spinning skulls — being effortlessly recreated on the C64. It's a pity the backgrounds are so plain underground, but generally this is top-notch for graphics. Equally importantly, the rich Amiga soundtrack by David Whittaker has been turned into a gorgeous C64 classic.

Beast may not have much in the way of original ideas, but playability is high and it's good how you can soon progress quite a way due to a large number of lives. Then once you've explored a bit, you can start figuring out the attack patterns so less and less lives are lost every time you play. All in all, a first-class conversion which improves over the original in some ways, playing really well with superlative presentation.

★ Using a special weapon to defeat one of the huge cavern guardians.





★ Ducking to avoid firebolts, the hero hits the crystal ball to gain a powerful weapon.

army of monstrous beings in your quest to destroy this reign of evil. An epic adventure begins on those famous grassy plains where masses of parallax scroll inspired so many Amiga purchases. The C64 is very close to the 16-bit original and immediately presents you with a choice. To the right you'll find the entrance to Necropolis, but there's plenty of monsters to defeat before you can get there: a flying dragon which drops bombs, numerous alien formations, rockets and granite-encased creatures. Alternatively you might like to sprint left where a tree trunk encloses the entrance to a massive underground complex.

To begin with, our hairy hero is armed only with his fists, but later on there's a jetpack, a laser gun and an electrical bolt which must be used on the correct monster. You need to be adept with these as a single hit costs one life. Death brings a brief moment of invulnerability — if you've got some lives left to lose. Also, if you fall on spikes all your lives are lost. The 25 lives you start with can be quickly lost, but there are strength potions to restore some or all of your lives.

Far from being a shadow of the original, this ambitious conversion actually manages to outshine it. For a start, the graphics are excellent with an incredible eleven levels of parallax above ground. There's tremendous variety in the nasties too, and their attack patterns. The no-nonsense beat-'em-up action is almost identical to the Amiga but benefits from a seemingly faster game pace. It's also slightly easier to play (a good thing — the original was initially very frustrating) with 25 lives instead of the previous 12. However, a huge challenge is provided by the sheer size of the game, only made feasible by the cartridge format which avoids any multiload hassle — just the odd informative interlevel text screen, before instantaneously loading the next section. There's also a good rendition of the Amiga's moody soundtrack, changing for certain sections. It seemed a bit ambitious to most, but C64 *Shadow* has turned out extremely well with even more polish and playability than the original.

PRESENTATION 83%
Classic scrolling intro, choice of soundtrack or FX, plenty of loading with text messages — but instantaneous loading makes it really fast, better than the Amiga!

GRAPHICS 89%
11 levels of parallax scrolling above ground. Below ground is a little disappointing but the huge variety of creatures is amazing.

SOUND 90%
Gorgeous, moody soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 87%
25 lives give you the chance to explore quite a way, even though it is tough right from the start.

LASTABILITY 86%
A big challenge, tough and imaginative.

OVERALL 86%

A brilliant conversion.

The city is suffering from Nuke – a deadly drug being pushed by psychotic criminals. You'd think that with Robocop on the streets, that wouldn't be a problem. But the drug baron behind the illicit enterprise, Cain, undergoes a surprising career change. He joins the police force – as

CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
Yum Yum!
CART GAME

MOVIE TIE-IN

ROBO

Following on from the chart-busting original, *Robocop 2* places you once more in the tin wellies of Alex 'metal' Murphy. This time he's on the trail of a vicious Detroit drug ring which is pushing 'Nuke' to the kids of the city.

The game initially follows Murphy's efforts to track down the villains through different sections of their Nuke plant on the Rouge River, while destroying Nuke canisters and rescuing hostages. Robocop has to stomp across horizontally scrolling scenes, making his way across platforms and avoiding booby traps and hazardous machinery. Huge metal crushers plummet from the roof and threaten to flatten the stainless one, rolling oil drums have to be jumped over, death-bringing electric sparks leap between electrodes, rotating cogs trip up the unwary and conveyor belts carry our hero towards certain doom.

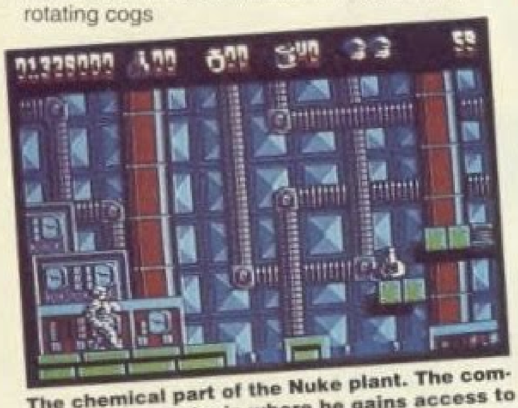
Robocop's jumping abilities have to be employed to avoid most of these hazards while his gun takes care of the more humanoid-shaped problems. As befits a three-ton copper, Robo is slightly tricky to control with poor acceleration and some horrible inertia – it really *feels* like this guy has a weight problem!

There are collectibles to... er... collect, and these include weapon power-ups (autofire, three-way fire, scatterfire and heat-seekers), temporary invincibility, extra time and cans of baby food to replace Robo's lost energy. Everything you'd expect from a first class platform game is there. The trail continues in this vein through another factory complex, until Robocop meets the drug lord Cain in a single screen shoot out to the death. After a head-to-head battle with Cain, Robocop must then advance to the Civic centre where Robocop 2 (controlled by the recently demised Cain) is being unveiled to the populace. Then it's on to the final showdown with the maniacal machine...

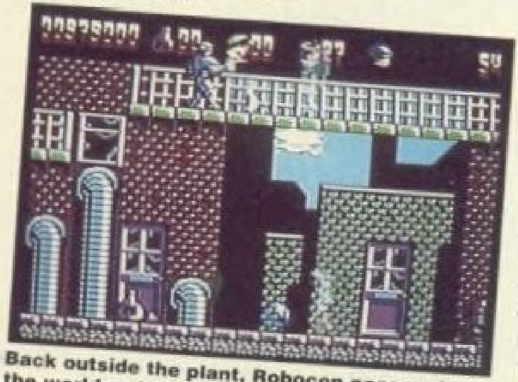
Ocean's efforts are cartoon like: visuals are bold, very brightly coloured (bordering on gaudy) and the characters all have a very cartoony feel.

The game's console heritage (it was originally designed for the Nintendo System) shows through in the presentation and game-

> **Conveyor belts carry our hero towards certain doom**



The chemical part of the Nuke plant. The computer behind Robo is where he gains access to the memory puzzle sub-game

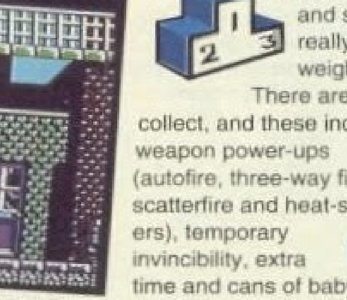


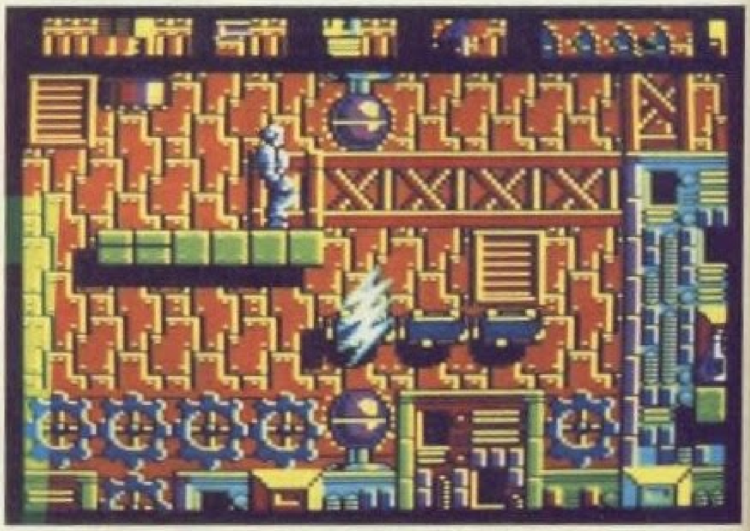
Back outside the plant, Robocop goes up in the world as he continues villain blasting and drug busting

Practice makes prefect. Er.... perfect

To complete each level you have to destroy more than 60% of the Nuke canisters. If you don't, rather than simply end the game, you get sent to the firing range for practice and to have your weapons recalibrated.

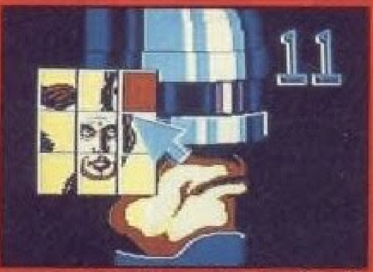
You have to blast the 'villain' cut-outs which appear from behind buildings and at openings, while leaving innocent bystanders in one piece. Extra time, extra ammo and bonus-point Nuke canisters can be shot but if you fail to reach the set number of targets before the timer hits zero, you have to attempt the firing range again. Fail a second time, and you return to the last level to try again.





In Cain's Nuke plant things are looking pretty hairy for Robocop. That spark spells certain doom for our metal chum and those cogs and conveyor belts are equally deadly

We can rebuild him



After Robocop has been captured, dismantled, rebuilt and reprogrammed, you have to correct his malfunctioning instincts. This is accomplished by accessing a computer terminal and completing a sliding tile puzzle sub-game where Murphy's jumbled portrait has to be reconstructed.

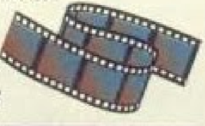
By moving the spinning arrow (nice effect) to the chosen tile and pressing the fire button, the tile moves into the adjacent, empty square. Repeat this in the right order and it's possible to rearrange the tiles so that the face is complete once more. You only have 30 seconds to do it in, and success is rewarded with bonus points.

COP 2

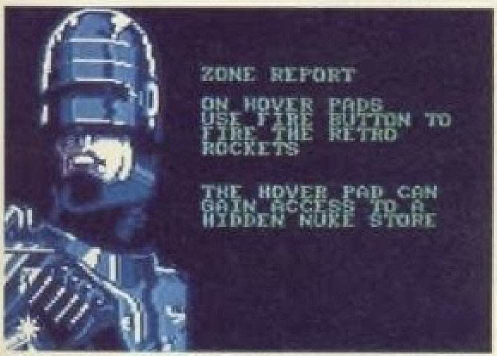
It's a Corker!

play. There are loads of secret levels which you'll just have to find by trial and error, and the gameplay is tricky, entertaining and very addictive.

With 12 different levels, sub-games and shoot-outs (check out our panel pieces on these), *Robocop 2* looks all set to carry on the phenomenal success of the original!



STEVE

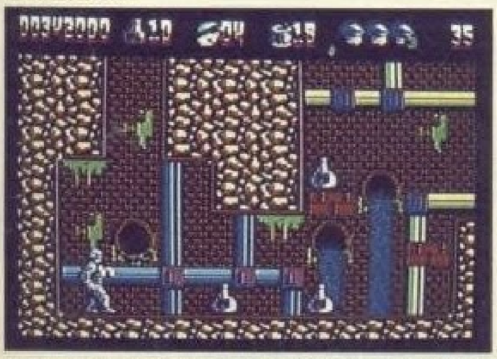


ZONE REPORT

ON HOVER PADS USE FIRE BUTTON TO FIRE THE RETRO ROCKETS

THE HOVER PAD CAN GAIN ACCESS TO A HIDDEN NUKE STORE

After each level an inter-mission screen such as this one provides the details of Robocop's next mission



Ah-ha. A hidden Nuke store. Cop all those Nuke canisters for a hefty points bonus (not to mention feeling pretty darned clever to boot)

Read this

If you're having difficulty loading the *Robocop 2* demo from the *CF4 PowerPack*, check out Inside Info. The tape demo has a sensitive loader and Inside Info tells you how to get sensitive loaders working when it seems they rather wouldn't.

Game	**Robocop 2**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.95**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Gaudy graphics lack atmosphere

100

90%

- Different arcade and puzzle sub-games break up the action and keep boredom at bay
- Hidden levels provide extra reasons to go exploring!
- Inertia-heavy control really adds to the feeling of playing the part of 'Robocop'
- 12 challenging levels to get to grips with
- Backdrops are heavily detailed and feature lots of nicely animated hazards
- Addictive mixture of tricky platform action and head-to-head shooting scenes
- Thumping series of soundtracks beef up the action

...AND THE UPPERS

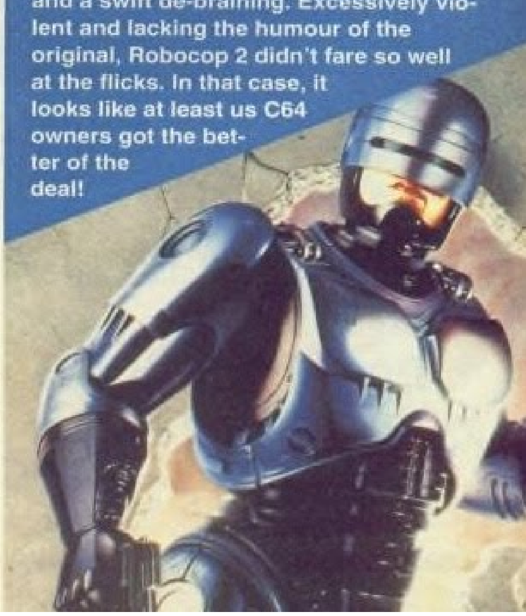
0

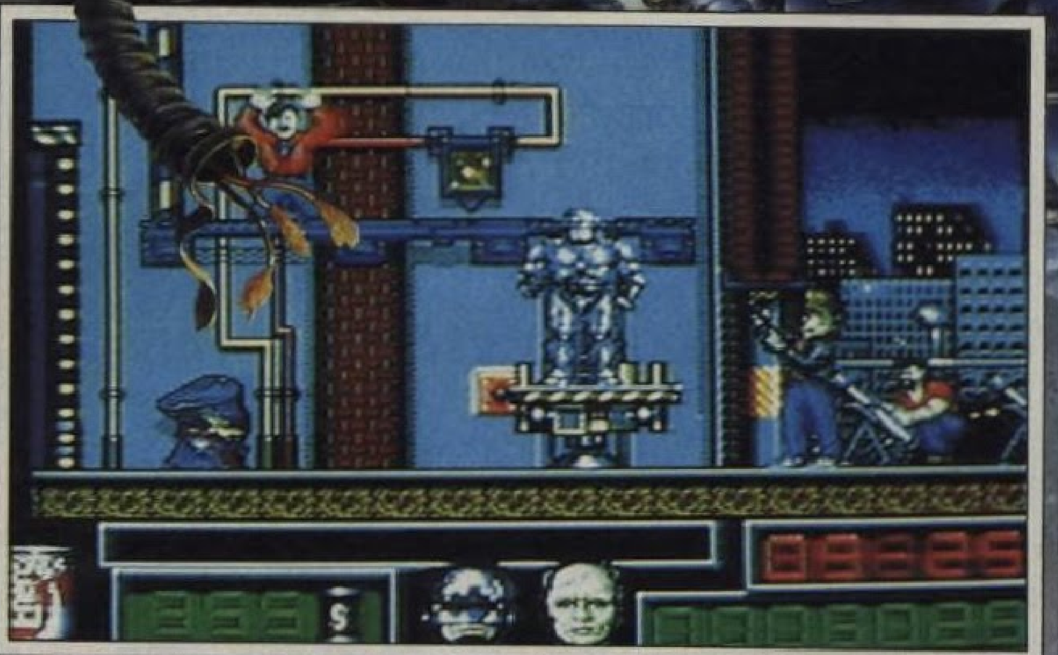
ROBOCOP 2 THE MOVIE

This tale follows Robocop on the trail of drug lord Cain and his cronies. The villains manufacture the evil narcotic 'Nuke' and push it to the youngsters of Detroit. After a disastrous Nuke raid, Robocop is captured and dismantled. OCP doctor Juliette Faxx wants to bring in her own, nastier version of Robo. She reprograms Robocop with irrelevant directives so that he becomes useless.

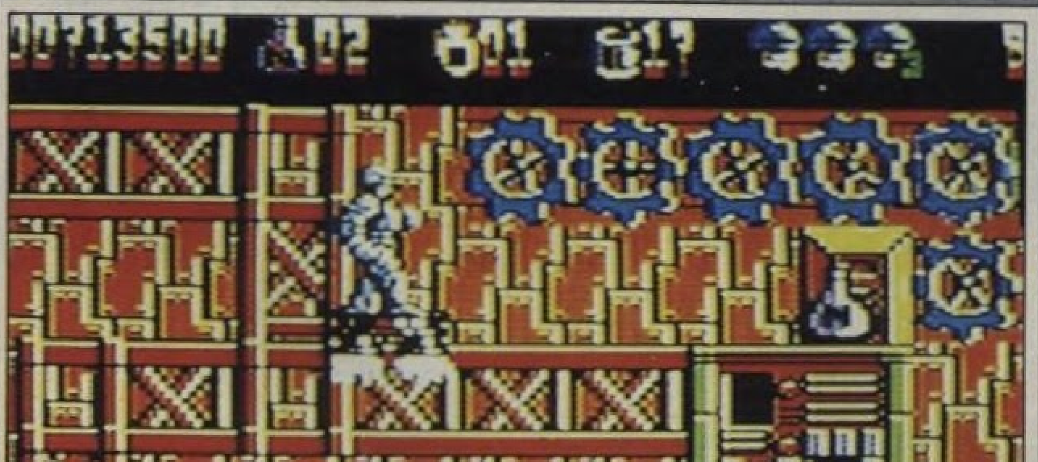
Robocop plugs himself into the police mainframe and restore his emotions and mind back to the way it was. He busts Cain and puts him in hospital. Faxx pulls the plug on Cain and slams his grey matter in Robocop 2 – a monster so mean that Ed-209 would dribble oil at the merest sight of him.

Unfortunately, Cain – or what's left of him – is still addicted to Nuke. One whiff of the stuff sends Robocop 2 on the rampage. Cue final conflict – a big punch up and a swift de-braining. Excessively violent and lacking the humour of the original, Robocop 2 didn't fare so well at the flicks. In that case, it looks like at least us C64 owners got the better of the deal!





★ Searching for a secret store of Nuke. Press fire to thrust upwards on the hoverpad. One touch on the cogs is fatal! (C64)



★ RoboCop must rescue the hostages as well as terminating the punks. (Amiga)

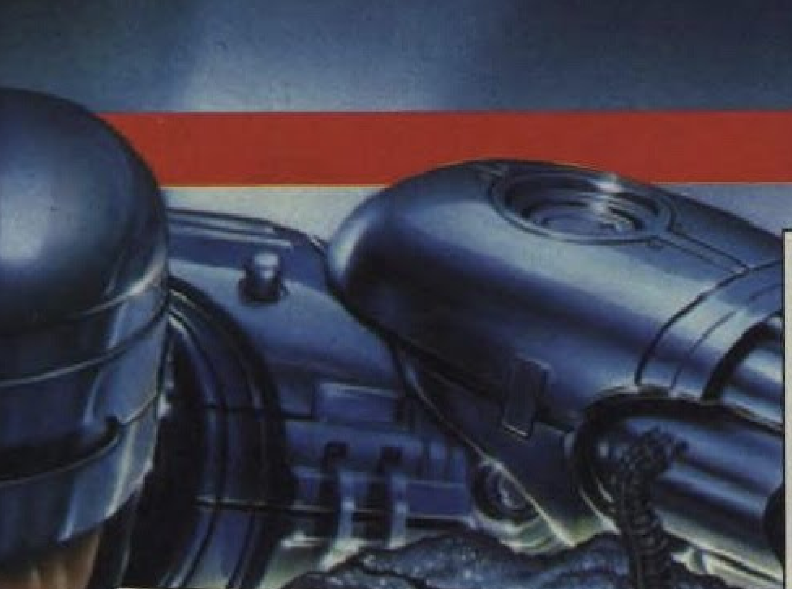
The lethal new drug Nuke has swept Old Detroit with devastating effect and the police are on strike — only RoboCop is on the beat. Unfortunately Robo's creators, OCP corporation, want a crime wave to force the city into bankruptcy so they can take it over! The awesome Robo 2 is eventually sent to ensure no-one saves Detroit...

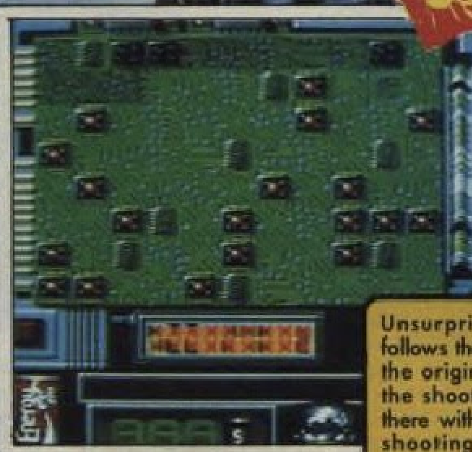
This heavy metal battle is completely different on C64 and Amiga. On the Amiga, Robo's first battle takes place in the Nuke laboratories. Collect 10 Nuke capsules to shut down the labs. Drug baron Cain has unlimited and heavily armed henchmen, plus a Taser-wielding woman to fry Robo's circuits if he's not careful. Coke vending machines top up energy while power-up capsules temporarily give rapid, three- and five-way fire and other extras (some bad). There's also ten hostages to rescue for an extra life.

The blast-'em-up, multi-way scrolling action continues into a Brewery. This is Cain's last scene before being turned into RoboCop 2, who makes his debut at the OCP Civic Centrum level where Robo takes on Harley-riding thugs, robot defences, laser forcefields, ED-209s and finally, Robo 2 in a fight to the bitter end.

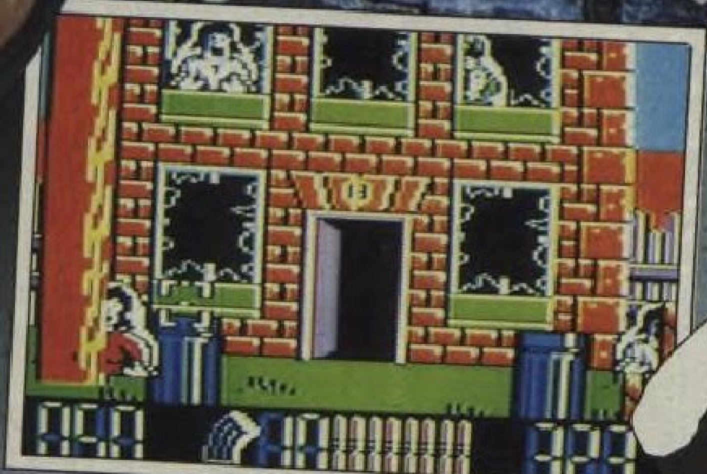
● Ocean, C64 £19.99 cartridge; Amiga £24.99

ROBOCOP 2

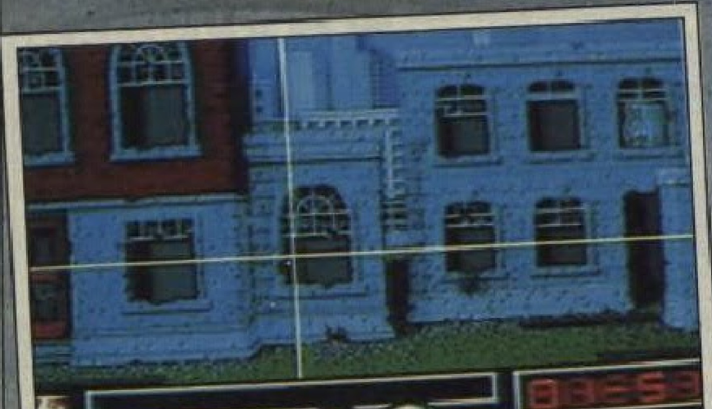




★ During the game, RoboCop must recover the memories of himself and his wife via this section. (Amiga)



★ Terminate the perps and save the hostages in the shooting gallery screen. (C64)



★ RoboCop practises on the shooting gallery. (Amiga)

Between the three blast-'em levels are two logic puzzles and two shooting galleries. To piece together his memories, Robo must remove faulty chips from increasingly complex memory banks without backtracking (earning a continue-play if successful). Completing the shooting gallery boosts Robo's firepower lethality.

On the C64, the plot remains much the same although the action is spread over *14* horizontal-scroll levels, involving leaping from platform to platform, dodging bullets and avoiding the slightest contact with anything. A hover pad can be used to jet around, platforms can be moved and ceiling magnets are useful for

Unsurprisingly, **Amiga** *2* follows the same basic lines as the original. The carnage of the shoot-'em-up sections is there with simple puzzles and shooting galleries as sub-games. But if it's not original, there's no arguing about the superb execution. The sensation of Robo blasting his way through masses of henchmen is awesome. Explosions going off all around, bullets flying everywhere and sampled screams make for a stunning showcase of mindless violence. Special features like the warehouse actually blowing up, Cain and even ED-209's guest appearance epitomise the quality of Special FX's work. If *RoboCop 2* was a coin-op I couldn't imagine it looking much different to this. The levels are big and so tough a game lifetime can be measured in seconds but you sure have one hell of a sonic and graphic blast!

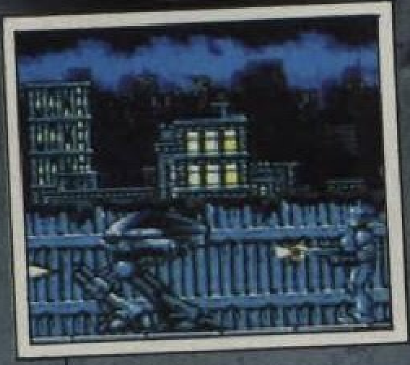
The **C64** game goes for the style of a *Super Mario Bros* variant. Jumping around platforms is as crucial as trigger finger action. The ultra-violence of the original game has been replaced with a cuter, less serious approach. There's a fair bit of blasting, mega-baddie confrontations, and a dozen or more normal villains per level. But most of the action is in dodging flames, whirring cogs, electrical bolts and suchlike, riding hoverpods and, of course, tackling all the sub-levels. Over 20 levels mean it rivals any Japanese game for size.

On the debit side the graphics can't compare with *Navy SEALs*, but Ocean point out this is a more ambitious game, with a lot more sprites on screen. In fact, the bright colours and chunky graphics establish an enjoyable cuteness. And at least Robo himself is still pretty tough and well animated. Combined with gameplay which is fun and fast-flowing, this hugely playable game offers brilliant value for money.

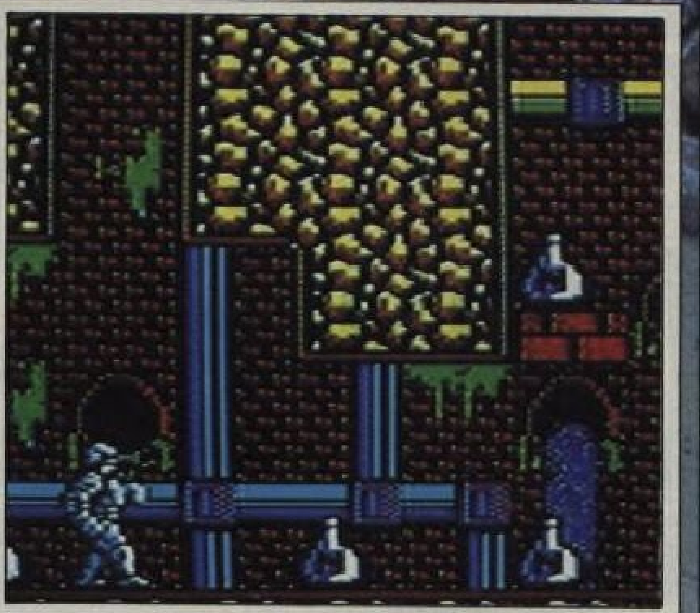
The **Amiga** version of *Robo 2* may not be that original, but who cares? 2 sets a new standard for the Amiga, with excellent animation, full use of the Amiga's superb colour palette, silky scrolling and digitized sound FX. A full blooded Amiga game!

On top of this there's a slick front end with digitized pre-level portraits and even a rapping cheat mode! The puzzle game and shooting gallery are nice sub-levels, and the package as a whole is unmissable.

The **C64** is equally well presented, with a great front end and animated presentation screens. Gameplay starts off a bit weird, but is only the beginning of a giant game packed with variety. The more you play it, the more you like it. Good fun but I'm unsure of whether it's a Sizzler because of the graphics — which are a bit blocky with flicker. Gameplay is good, though, and I like it a lot better than the original.



★ Robo takes on ED209 again! (Amiga)



★ Destroy the vials of Nuke to defeat Cain's evil conspiracy. (C64)

crossing chasms. Robo faces not only gun-toting criminals but also giant grinders, jet thrusters, lasers, crushers and a whole lot more besides.

The basic aim is to collect Nuke capsules and arrest special criminals. Failure to achieve at least a 60% rate of either on a level leads to a shooting gallery where Robo has to shoot a selected number of criminal targets to progress. Failure takes Robo back to the start of the previous stage. There are also secret bonus stages with dozens of extra Nuke capsules. Best of all, there's two sub-games where extra lives and millions of points can be won. In the first, Robo has to piece together his memory in a sliding block puzzle, while in the second (a Mastermind-style sub-game) Robo is attempting to open a safe. The main part of the game, the side-on view combat, features the same settings as the Amiga game, plus the sewers, but they're laid out completely differently and made much bigger — each locale is divided into several levels. There's static screen one-on-one combat with Cain, and later, Robo 2.

C64 *RoboCop* has dropped the original's detail for a blockier style. This isn't as attractive, but it allows a lot more freedom with how the game moves and the number of sprites on screen. It's less serious, but better fun. The variety of backgrounds and obstacles is impressive in this platforms-and-ladders format, while there's still plenty of violence with a fair number of villains and mega-baddie confrontations. There is some flicker, but the cartoon-style and high playability compensate. Later on there's hoverpads to ride on, one-to-one battles with Cain and Robo 2 and plenty of hidden levels and sub-games, all played against backdrops packed with activity and colour. Sound FX are well above average — Robo's stomping is simply great! To sum up, an immensely playable C64 game but sporting console graphics (something I can certainly live with, given the sheer size of the game). Great!

On the **Amiga**, violence is the thing: superbly animated villains carry rocket launchers and AK-47s. The basic shoot-'em-up format is familiar, but there's more platform action with conveyor belts to master, hooks to ride on and beer vats to fall in. More importantly, the look and feel of the game is light years from the original. It plays and looks like an arcade game and is unmissable for this reason. The puzzle sections are only okay, and the shooting gallery is too flat, but those three shoot-'em-up sections are the best I've seen on the Amiga. So don't miss out!

amiga

PRESENTATION 88%

Excellent title screen effects, digitized movie pictures for each stage, fairly rapid multiload.

GRAPHICS 94%

Characters are superbly detailed, with great shading, animation and variety. Coin-op quality, in short, while the logic puzzles and shooting galleries look good too.

SOUND 89%

A constant volley of noise — clearly-sampled explosions, screams and gunfire — all used to the max with a decent title tune to boot.

HOOKABILITY 94%

Even dying very quickly in your first several games is definitely NOT going to put you off getting into this superb-looking game! Especially with its coin-op feel and gorgeous graphic rewards.

LASTABILITY 91%

Familiar game ideas but with three tough blasting levels, tricky puzzle games and a vicious RoboCop 2 to take on, you WON'T be putting this one down.

OVERALL 92%

Does this mean *RoboCop* will be in the charts for another two years?

C64

PRESENTATION 91%

Animated title screen, alternate two-player option, standard or twin-fire button joystick options, music/FX option. Good level start and complete status screens. Infinite continue-plays.

GRAPHICS 85%

A little blocky, but cute and well animated with dramatically changing later levels.

SOUND 80%

Great Robo-stomp, a wide variety of good FX plus an enjoyable main tune.

HOOKABILITY 89%

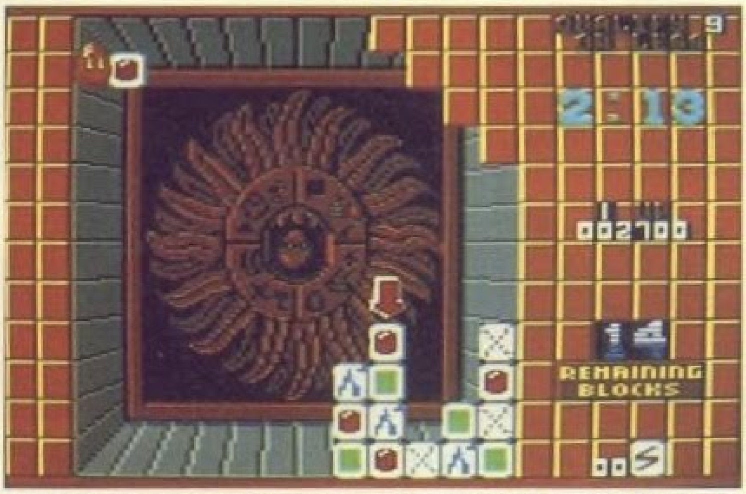
Not much shooting to begin with, but the high playability soon gets you hooked.

LASTABILITY 93%

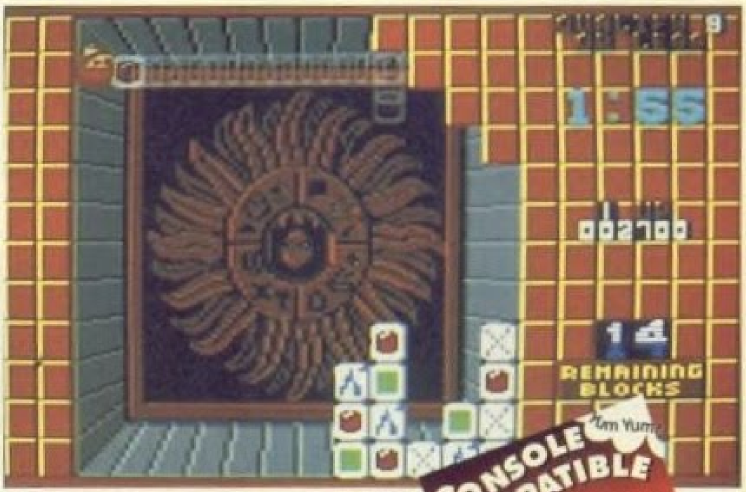
Over 20 levels including the shooting gallery, two sub-games, numerous secret levels and mega-confrontations.

OVERALL 90%

A massive game, packed with variety and playability.



And here we are on the first level with a pretty sun motif in the background. Mr Potato head is all set up to bounce his block off the ceiling and hit the pile at the point marked with a large red arrow...



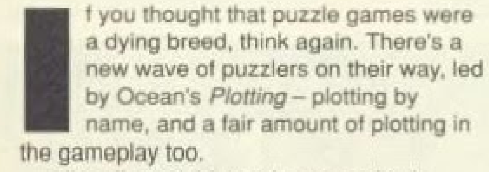
... The red target block should now disappear, return the green one below, and leave the first red one in its place!

CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

PLOTTING

If you thought that puzzle games were a dying breed, think again. There's a new wave of puzzlers on their way, led by Ocean's *Plotting* – plotting by name, and a fair amount of plotting in the gameplay too.

Like all good things, the gameplay is dead simple: you take control of a small brown blobby creature who's sole aim in life is to chuck single blocks at a large pile of blocks on the right. Now this would be an incredibly dull life if it wasn't for the fact that the block either bounces off and comes whizzing back (vaguely interesting) or makes any similar blocks disappear and sends another, differently designed block back instead (very interesting indeed).



Another screen another background. Brownie can bounce his block off the wall to hit the block at the back...

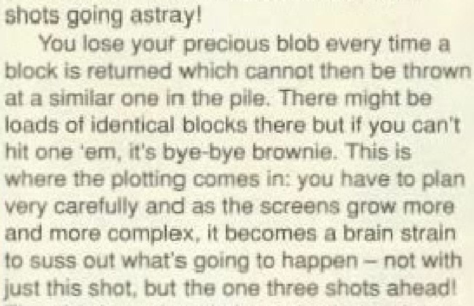
Confused? Well what happens is this: if the thrown block makes contact with a block bearing the same design, one of the them is destroyed (it's difficult to tell which one exactly) and the other swaps places with the next block in line, which is then returned to the blobby one. All you have to do is remove a set number of blocks per level – do this and you're on your way to the next.

Blocks are thrown in a straight line but can be bounced off the walls, ceilings and bits of plumming that adorn the screen so that you can reach blocks at the back of the pile or hit blocks on their top. An arrow shows exactly where rebound shots are going to end up, so there's no excuse for shots going astray!

You lose your precious blob every time a block is returned which cannot then be thrown at a similar one in the pile. There might be loads of identical blocks there but if you can't hit one 'em, it's bye-bye brownie. This is where the plotting comes in: you have to plan very carefully and as the screens grow more and more complex, it becomes a brain strain to suss out what's going to happen – not with just this shot, but the one three shots ahead! There's also a time limit, so don't spend *too* long thinking about your next move, eh?

Plotting is nicely programmed (courtesy of the Twilight team), very polished and extremely captivating. The only worry is that non-puzzle freaks could grow tired of the samey action after mastering a few levels.

Oh, and just to keep you on your toes, there's also a time limit



... Sending back the blue one beneath. This he can now throw at the same block on the top left of the pile to get rid of it. Simple!

No doubt you already know whether this sort of game sends waves of pleasure rushing through your veins. If so, the only decision left is whether to rush out and buy this now or wait for the (probably exclusive) review of Ocean's *Puzznic*! Is there no end to this mental strain?

STEVE

Game	**Plotting**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Puzzles get more difficult but the game style doesn't change at all
- Two-player coin-op mode has gone

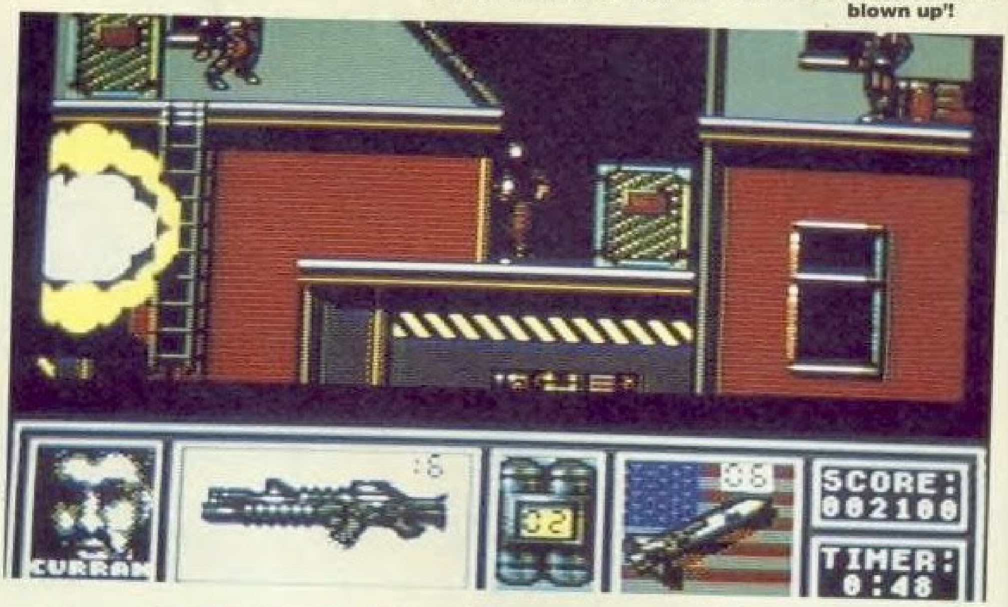
100

80%

0

- **Cartridge-only version provides all the detailed backdrops of the arcade original**
- **The puzzley gameplay is very addictive, once the logic and tactics have been sussed**
- **Decent coin-op soundtrack and spot effects throughout**
- **Graphics are extremely clear and well presented: block-chucking and blob animation is very neat indeed**
- **32 levels to beat – and then beat again versus a tougher time limit!**
- **Instant access to banish those multiload blues!**

...AND THE UPPERS



'Mad Dog' Curran has got himself a missile launcher and is introducing the Arabs to the subtle art of 'being blown up'!

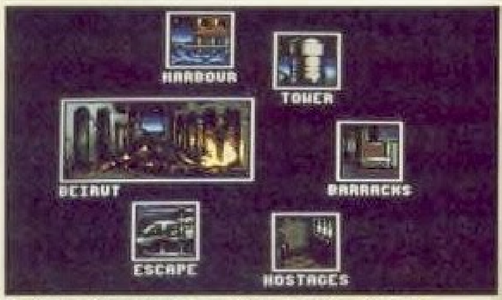
If you're thinking that the US Navy have recruited small black, flippered amphibious mammals to do their secret missions, think again. The heroes of the piece are SEALs – which stands for SEa Air and Land – the US equivalent of the SAS and SBS rolled into one elite and very tough bunch of guerrilla troops.

Five of these guys are called into the Middle East to rescue the crew of a downed helicopter from some anti-American fanatics or other. In the course of executing a daring rescue bid, they discover hidden caches of Stinger surface-to-air missiles, which the naughty Arabs shouldn't have – and this is where film and game plots part company. The movie heroes defuse the missiles and trot off home, while the game goes striding off on an extended 'defuse the Stinger missiles' mission all of its own.

NAVY SE

Yum Yum!
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

Ocean's latest action-packed cartridge release is having a strange effect here. People have taken to wearing black clothing and smearing their faces with boot polish. That's OK but it would help if they got out of the habit of crawling between the desks...



SEALs' itinerary. Monday – kill terrorists, defuse missiles. Tuesday – kill terrorists, defuse missiles. Wednesday – get blown up

The crack five-man team of Curran, Hawkins, Ramos, Rexer and Leary take it in turns (under your expert guidance of course) to stomp through five suitably Middle Eastern-looking scenes in order to find and render inoperative a set number of Stinger missiles. Each blokey walks, jumps, climbs, clambers, and monkey-swings his way through the screens filled with rampaging terrorist-types. The sprites are beautifully drawn and detailed, and the animation is just superb. Although the SEALs are extremely athletic, control is straightforward and comfortable – moves are all accessed by the joystick alone, and the SEAL adapts to the surroundings, automatically climbing over boxes when they're in front of him, for instance.

This leaves the fire button for activating the current weapon while on the two-button GS joystick, the second button pauses the game. Extra weapons can be found by blowing up the large trunks and collecting the hardware within. You can cop for a nice new rapid fire machine gun, a dead useful missile-launcher or – my fave – the flame thrower. In all cases, the status panel shows which weapon is in use, and how many rounds of ammo are left – so don't be too heavy on the old trigger finger. You don't want to resort to fists and harsh language now do you?

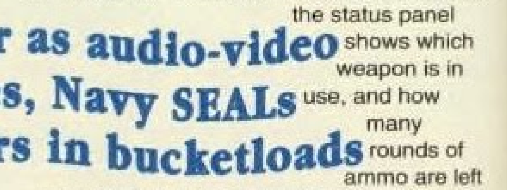
As far as audio-video goes, Navy SEALs delivers in bucketloads

US style SAS

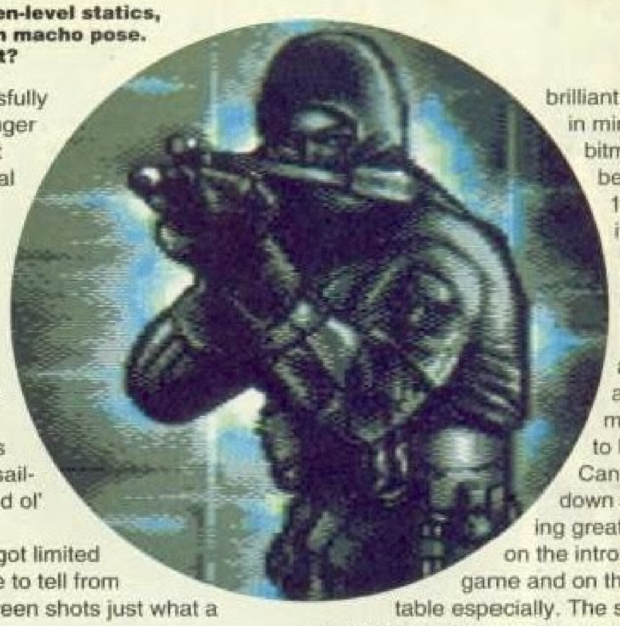
The US Navy SEALs were commissioned on order from President Kennedy in 1962, to expand the role of of the existing Navy Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs). The name is derived from the different elements under which they operate – SEa, Air and Land. SEALs are primarily used as small forward infiltration teams with as few as three men per team.

Each man has his own area of specialisation: the 'wheel' (the officer in charge); swimmer scouts; the 'powder train' (explosives expert) backed up by a 'rigger' (supervises the laying of charges); a radio operator; and a heavy weapons man (machine gun carrier).

Favoured weapons of the SEALs were a 'choked' shotgun to throw a wide spray of buckshot, the Stoner M63A1 gas-fed multi-purpose machine gun and Navy K-Bar knife with a 7 to 9-inch blade. Well, they used to be – what they use now is a secret. Probably.

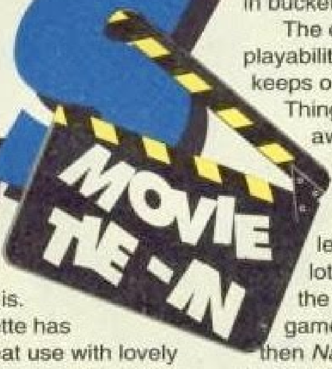


Battling through the streets of Beirut on the last level. Poor old Curran crouches to avoid the hail of Arab fire!



One of the between-level statics, showing a SEAL in macho pose. Erm... Nice, isn't it?

ALS



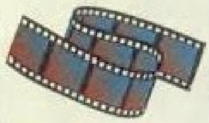
Having successfully defused all the Stinger missiles on the first five scenes, the final scene is a *Robocop*-style shoot out where your remaining men (should you have any!) have to blast their way through the streets of Beirut before making rendezvous with their sub and sailing back to the good ol' US of A.

Unless you've got limited vision you'll be able to tell from the multitude of screen shots just what a good-looker *Navy SEALs* is. The C64 palette has been put to great use with lovely earthy colour schemes and wonderfully detailed backdrops. The screen smooth scrolls horizontally and each level is nice and large so you don't have to stick to one route every time you play and you can even map the sucker if you like.

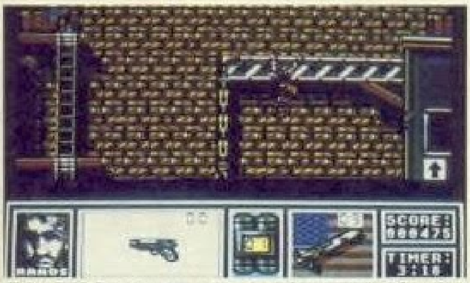
In between levels there are static intermission screens which are simply brilliant (and bearing in mind that each bitmap screen is between 6 and 10K big, it's only thanks to the cartridge that these are here at all). Credit must also go to Matthew Cannon for laying down some thumping great soundtracks on the intro, during the game and on the high score table especially. The spot effects are all of a similarly high standard, so as far as audio-video goes, *Navy SEALs* delivers in bucketloads!

The only notable drawbacks come in the playability: the game starts off hard and just keeps on going. This isn't necessarily a Bad Thing – it should keep you plugging away for ages – but if you're as incompetent as me, the first few goes will be frustratingly short.

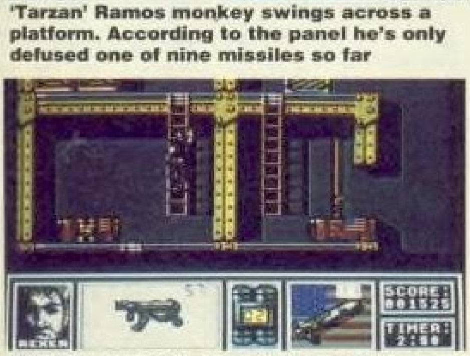
Also, the gameplay on the first five levels doesn't really change an awful lot. If there was a bit more variety in the mission objectives, or it had a sub-game or something, then *Navy SEALs* would be an absolute stonker. As it stands, it only manages 'very good!'



STEVE



'Tarzan' Ramos monkey swings across a platform. According to the panel he's only defused one of nine missiles so far



There are two Stinger missiles boxes on the lower platform. The left one has been defused, while the right is still active

Game	**Navy Seals**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Repetitive gameplay across first five levels reduces the lasting interest
- High difficulty level from the outset

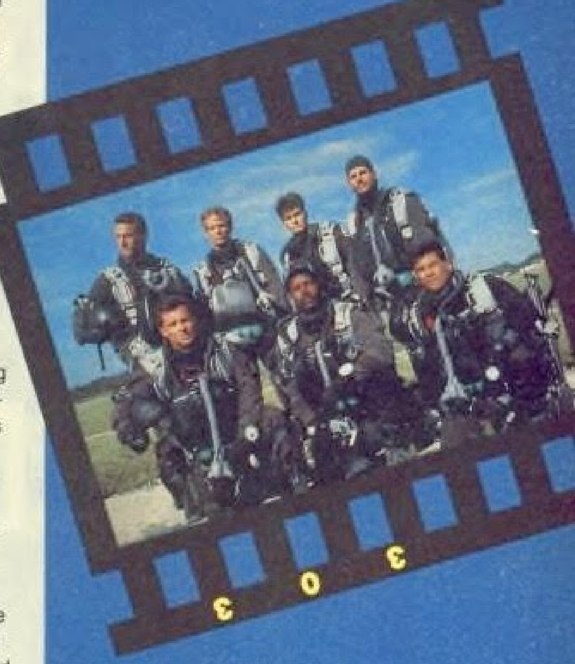
100

81%

0

- **Huge levels mean you aren't restricted to the same method of attack every time you play**
- **Background graphics are great – good colour schemes, plenty of detail and very moody**
- **Wealth and quality of animation on main sprites is amazing**
- **Simple, responsive controls make the mission painless**
- **Ripping soundtracks and stonking spot effects**
- **Beautiful inter-level screens**
- ***Shinobi*-style gameplay is action-packed and addictive**
- **Friendly game design**

...AND THE UPPERS



SEALs on screen

Orion Pictures' new movie relates the normal, everyday, average, run-of-the-mill, ho-hum tale of secret SEAL operatives in a life-and-death rescue mission in the war-torn Middle East.

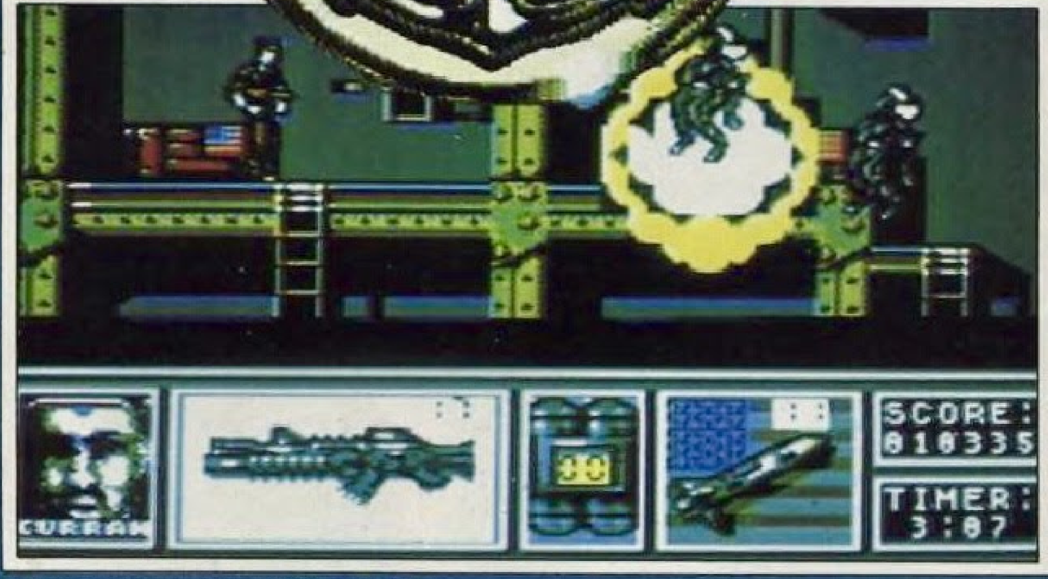
The film opens with the shooting down of a US helicopter over the Gulf and its pilot and co-pilot kidnapped by Arab fanatics. A crack team of five SEALS are ordered into the area to undertake a clandestine rescue mission. Silently, they come ashore and make their way to the terrorist hideout. Having killed swarms of terrorists, destroyed as much weaponry as possible and rendered communications set-up inoperable, they find and liberate the 'copter crew. Unfortunately, the co-pilot has surrendered to torture and died.

The pilot is rescued but in the course of their mission the SEALS discover a cache of Stinger missiles, so the SEALS decide to find and detonate the lot!

For some reason, the film didn't do that well in the states, so you can kiss goodbye to Navy SEALS 2, but you can make your own mind up when it appears some time around May.

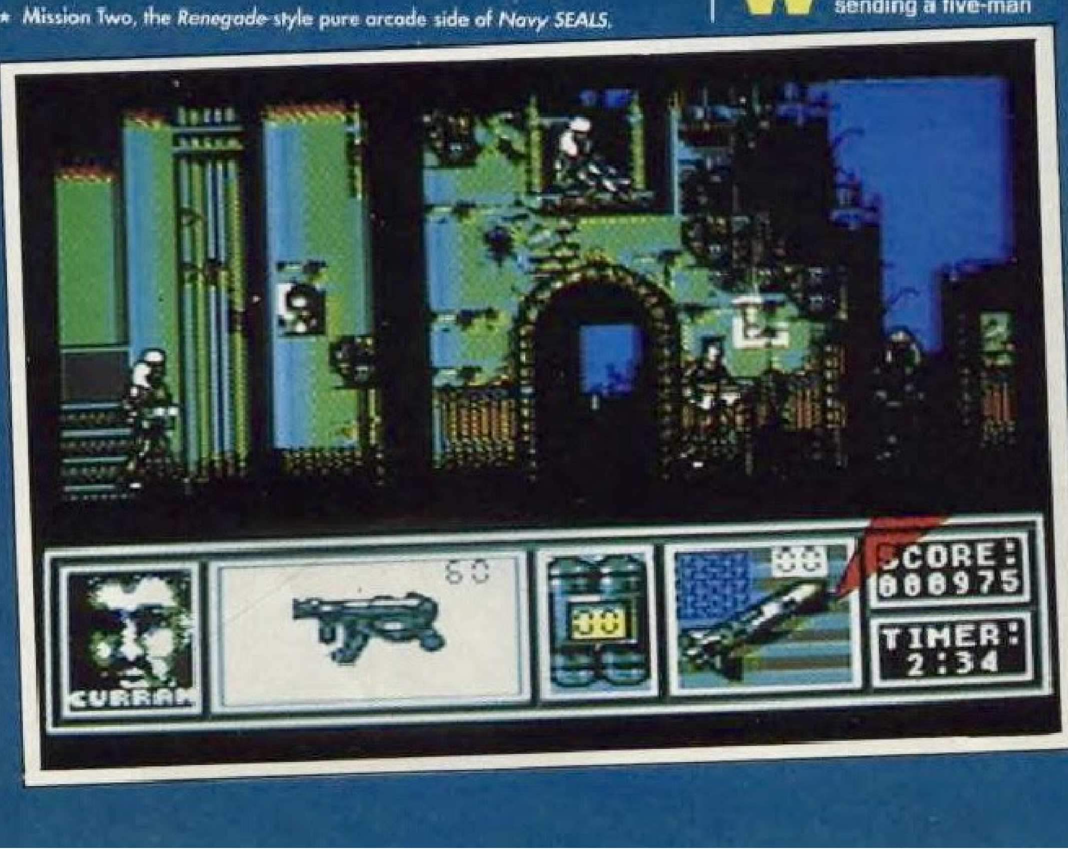
NAVY SEALS

● Ocean, C64
£19.99
cartridge



★ Curran uses a grenade to take out two Arabs.

★ Mission Two, the *Renegade*-style pure arcade side of *Navy SEALS.*



With half the American army in the Gulf, sending a five-man

It may have the look of *Untouchables's* level one but that's misleading; this is a brand new and quite sophisticated game-style. The way Meegan and Co. have set up kill zones on each level, with two or three Arabs covering passageways, has been thoughtfully done. Very often a direct route to a nearby Stinger crate is fatal until you've disposed of an Arab via a long trek around the level (encountering other kill zones in the process). The unlikely combination of 'arcade puzzle game' springs to mind when pushed to describe *Navy SEALS*!

Gameplay variety might not seem immense, but the way each level tests a different area of player tactics/skills is admirable. Level two sees lifts coming into play, level three introduces the crates as elements vital to mission success, level four requires mastering shinning along underneath ledges. As more platforms are brought in more accurate jumping is required, the Arab 'puzzles' expand dramatically in complexity and a rethink of tactics is required with the arrival of increasingly intelligent terrorists.

Alongside the excellent Matthew Cannon sonics (the interlevel map tune is my favourite) are the superlative graphics. The detail in level one is phenomenal and ranks among the best seen on the C64 yet, level two is graphically sparse but moody. The tunnels lead into barracks and the whole transition from one palette to another is expertly done, notably on the last level. Military installations aren't that original, but they vary significantly and establish a terrific atmosphere.

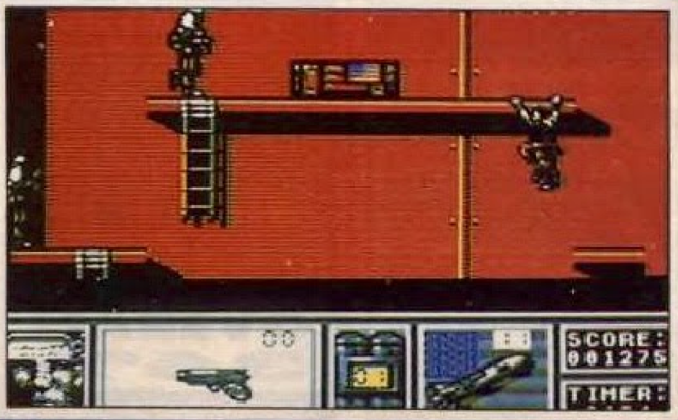
On the subject of presentation I can't enthuse enough. The cartridge is put to full use with presentation screens galore, while instantaneous loading makes for superb momentum. It gives a real coin-op feel and shows what cartridges really can do.

team to take on Arab terrorists might seem a bit quaint. Surely there's a spare aircraft carrier to throw around! But these are no ordinary troops, these are Navy SEALs — SEa Air Land commandos — the cream of the US military. One of their helicopters has been shot down and the crew captured by Arab fanatics. Under torture the co-pilot has died, only the pilot remains alive. Then there's a consignment of Stinger ground-to-air missiles which has gone missing. Perfectly capable of bringing down an airliner, the missiles must be found and destroyed. Then the SEALs must escape through the war-torn streets of Beirut.

The first part of the operation, mission one, is divided up into five distinct levels. These are all presented side-on, with multi-directional scrolling and plenty of platforms to leap between, and dangle from! You start off armed with a pistol, but can get extra weapons such as a machine gun, a grenade launcher and a flamethrower. These are hidden in special crates which can be opened by shooting them. Not very safe! Worse, some crates are vital for jumping up to platforms — once shot they're useless! Tactical thought is vital on mission one, a single bullet will kill you, knocking off one of your five-man squad and sending you back to the start of the level or where you last planted a bomb.

Mission Two is a simplistic sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up, a dash for the rendezvous with a helicopter which will take the SEALs to a waiting submarine. The streets of Beirut are packed with heavily armed Militia. Don't run or you'll end up in more trouble than you can handle, but don't dawdle either — there's a time limit. Just cautiously make your way forward, shoot anyone you see and duck under bullets.

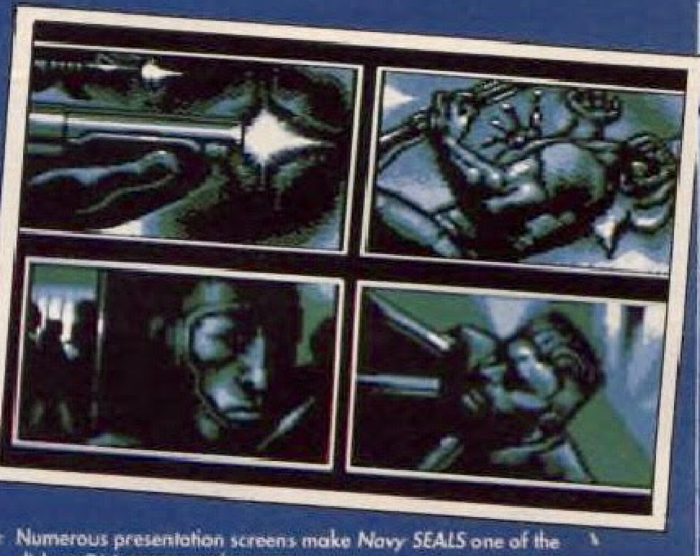
★ Hawkins hangs from a ledge — plenty of lateral thinking is needed to succeed on Mission One.



The Untouchables was probably my favourite C64 game of last year, so I couldn't wait for the latest from John Meegan and Stephen Thomson. It looks like a conventional mix of platforms and gunplay, but after having my first squad wiped out in seconds I realised this was far from the case. Instead *SEALs* forces you to think tactically, each terrorist has to be treated with the utmost respect. As soon as you see a glimpse of their shoes or whatever, their line of fire has to be worked out along with a means of killing them.

You could describe it as almost a puzzle game, and John has certainly put a lot of thought into it, but I prefer to think of it as a *realistic* game. No longer can you absorb enough lead to sink a battleship without slowing down, here just one bullet kills. The sense of being on a covert combat mission in a small team is brilliantly conveyed. The five levels of Mission One are going to keep me occupied for quite some time!

The other brilliant aspect of *SEALs* is the presentation, Stephen Thomson has actually got better. The background graphics are varied, clean and attractive. They're not always spectacular, Beirut isn't that glamorous!, but they look very good and suit the game. Sprites are superbly done, using *Untouchables*-style overlays to pack in the detail. But where Stephen really gets to shine is on the presentation screens. The *SEALs* logo is one of the best things I've seen on the C64, while numerous and varied interlevel screens are absolutely superb. This makes for a brilliant atmosphere which could only really be done on cartridge with the vital instant access. For anyone tired of the silliness of most shoot-'em-ups, this brilliantly realistic and atmospheric game is the one to get.



★ Numerous presentation screens make *Navy SEALS* one of the slickest C64 games we've seen.

Navy SEALs isn't a massive licence, but as with *Untouchables* that's more a bonus than anything else with Ocean giving themselves plenty of time to develop a top-notch game using their superb in-house approach. Unlike more simplistic multi-format releases, the game-style has been tailored for each machine. As with *The Untouchables* it plays very tough, level one taking time to work out. But unlike that game, once you work out the enemy tactics the level becomes a lot easier, so you're not discouraged from coming back. As you progress the terrorists get smarter, ranging from simple left/right/shoot opponents to full blown eight-way firing, fast moving Arabs pursuing the SEALs all around the level. And once you're an experienced commando the promise of seeing yet more superlative interlevel screens, plus the varied levels and simplistic action of mission two will keep you coming back for more.

Amiga update

John Meegan will be making his Amiga debut with *SEALs* around February time.

PRESENTATION 96%

Unbelievable loading screen — the gorgeous SEALs logo — numerous and excellent interlevel screens, music/FX option and three continue-plays.

GRAPHICS 91%

Super-detailed backgrounds look great, while SEALs and terrorists are superbly animated. Gorgeous inter-level screens.

SOUND 92%

Matthew Cannon provides a first class soundtrack, with great FX and tunelets.

HOOKABILITY 89%

Starts off tough, but once you start taking your time the game opens up brilliantly, ensnaring you completely.

LASTABILITY 93%

A formidable challenge, mixing arcade action and puzzles to keep you playing for ages.

OVERALL 92%

A superbly atmospheric and realistic mix of arcade action and tactics.

TOKI

Off for a 'bungle in the jungle', *Richard 'banana fiend' Taylor* goes 'ape' over this game's 'monkey magic'.

POWER INFO

Supplier:	Ocean
Price:	£14.99 Cart.
Availability:	Out now!!!

ARCADE

Another very Japanese cutesy-looking game. Another slightly odd scenario. You were once a happy, 'normal' 9-to-5 guy, devilishly good looking with a beatiful wife, powerful car and modest flat in Richmond, when an ugly witch decided that you should experience life as an ugly chimpanzee, no car or flat, and, worst of all, no wife! You must rescue her. That's it. When you have done this everything returns to normal. Hmmm. To achieve this, various obstacle courses must be tackled, and they contain all sorts of nasty characters and traps.

Things can be spat at, and your spit power can be increased by picking up bonus objects. Other creatures drop coins that must be collected. A crash helmet can be picked up that, believe it or not, protects your head. This is quite handy as multi-hit-to-kill baddies can be wiped out with one well placed head-butt!

Precision jumping is required throughout the game. Luckily, the control of the main character is good, you can move around in mid jump.

There are only five levels, but they are each quite large and don't have to be loaded (what with it being on cartridge and everything). The trouble is that once the levels have been sussed out, they become quite easy. Everything is in the same place. Rest assured, though, they are tough to begin with.

The graphics aren't outstanding, nor the sound, but it all works well together and adds up to an enjoyable game. With the new cartridge price, this is probably worth a go for most people. ✪

CRITICAL FACTOR

GRAPHICS	7
SONICS	6
HALF-LIFE	8
FIX FACTOR	7

100 DANGER!!!
90
80 HOT
70
60
50 WARM
40
30 COLD
20
10

DANGER RATING 73%

TOKI

Ocean, £14.99 cart only

Despite starring in one of the earliest computer games, albeit as a baddie in the oddly named *Donkey Kong*, our closest relations haven't appeared in that many computer games. We've had stacks of llamas, ducks, rats, a few elephants and even a couple of ninja rabbits, but chimps have been pretty thin on a game. It's a bit surprising: after all, chimps can use tools, swing from ropes, scratch their heads and generally outmanoeuvre Phil any day of the week.

Toki himself is pretty nimble but, erh, his etiquette is just a tad lacking. I mean dealing with your enemies by spitting in their eyes isn't nice, now is it? What's more, when your spit's so acidic it causes them to go up in a puff of smoke it's positively criminal!

You could say a chimp wouldn't know better, but Toki isn't really a chimp, well not under the skin he isn't. You see, he used to be just a regular sort of guy with a really scrumptious girlfriend. But then up popped a magician to steal his girlie away after smartly transforming him into an ape.

Monkey nuts

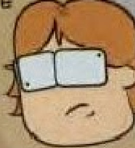
So literally spitting mad, our friend must journey through five levels, each consisting of plenty of leaping from platform to platform, climbing vines, swimming and yes, loadsa gobbin' at zillions of hideous villains. These include numerous mini-mega-baddies, and mega-mega end-level baddies — well, relatively mega. There's also a reasonable range of collectable items to give the usual range of special features: limited invincibility, super flamebreath and so on.

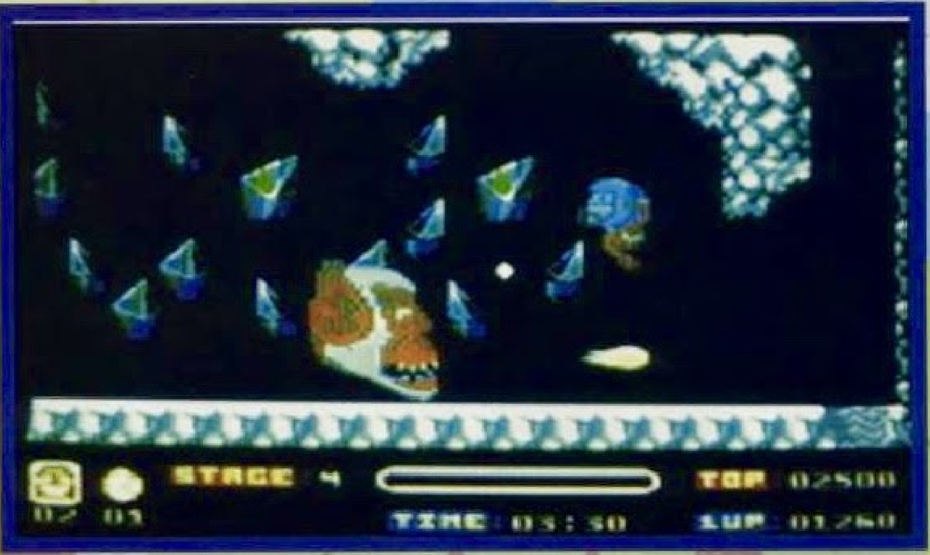
Cartridge power means the arcade's playability is fairly well recreated. The lack of multiload hassle is much appreciated, especially as the early levels aren't incredibly difficult to complete — they're fairly big, though, meaning reasonably good value for money.

Can't compare

The main drawback with *Toki* is simply '*Turricanitis*'. The gameplay offers little new over that mega-game, can't compare in size, and the graphics — well they're pretty varied, but the main sprite is rather splodgy, as are a fair few of the villains. *Toki* is colourful, there's quite a bit to do and the arcade playability is preserved, but without mega-graphics it's a bit so-so.

If you're a bit tired of this style of game *Toki* won't amaze you, but if you're a fan of the game-style more of the same probably won't go amiss, especially at a mere £14.99!

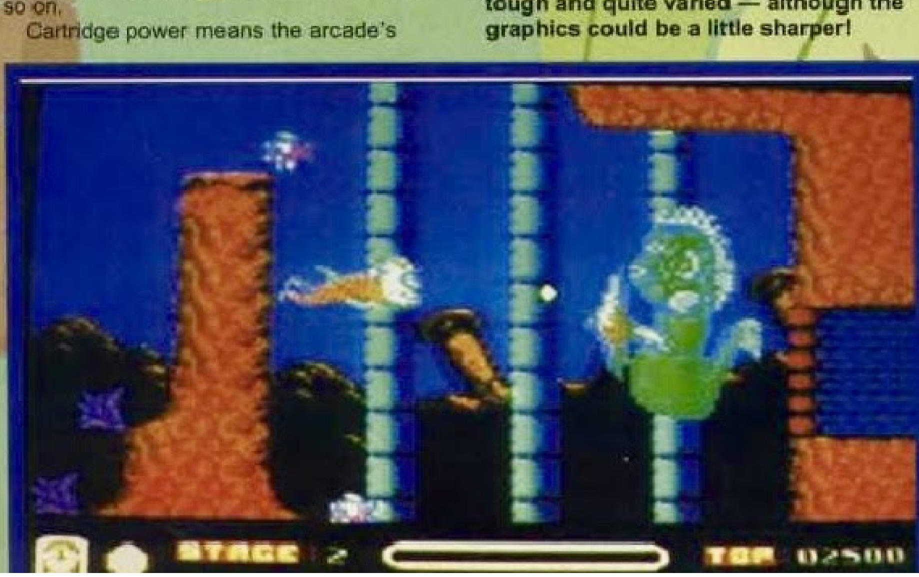




● **Weird! Wearing the American football helmet gives you a brief period of utter invincibility.**

As Stu says, *Toki* offers little new and the graphics are a little blurred — they're certainly not as slick as say, *Creatures*, and there's the odd glitch on big villains too. BUT it's certainly playable. The arcade layout is unpredictable, switching from simple horizontal scrolling to vertical, mixing in swimming sections and weirdo villains every now and then. This makes the urge to progress quite high: you never know what's at the end of the next screen — nor what bit of villainy the baddie sprites are about to spring on you! *Toki* isn't a classic, but its oddball theme is appealing, playability is good and the price not bad. Worth a look.

● **Mid-level guardians are numerous, tough and quite varied — although the graphics could be a little sharper!**



PRESENTATION 70%
Two continue-plays and instant access, but limited glitz with minimal intro pizzazz and interlevel hype.

GRAPHICS 79%
Varied and reasonably imaginative, but not as slick as they could be.

SOUND 74%
Choice of limited FX or a reasonable soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Coin-op addictivity soon sets in.

LASTABILITY 81%
A reasonable challenge

OVERALL 82%

A fun little conversion.

TOKI

Ocean swings into action with another cartridge-only coin-op convo. Our reviewer nips off for a bungle in the jungle and emerges later with this absolutely extraordinary (prehensile) tail

It's always the same innit? You finally find a girlie that you can really relate to, and just when you're getting on like a blazing block of flats, up pops an evil wizard who turns you into a giant chimp. (Happens to me all the time.)

This unfortunate situation has befallen the hero of our piece – a pleasant chap by the name of Toki. He has fallen ankles over earlobes in love with Miho, who is similarly besotted with him. Enter Bashtar (your average, run-of-the-mill evil wizard-type) who has desires upon Miho's personage. Seeing that Toki stands a much better chance than he does, Bashtar reverts to plan 'B': kidnap Mohi and turn that big ape Toki into a big ape.

Toki, as you can imagine, is rather miffed by this. Not only has he lost his girlfriend to some unthinkable fate but he now has to pause every couple of minutes to comb his face and indulge his burning desire for 'nanas and the occasional ant.

OK, enough chimpy jokes. The quest is this: Toki must traverse all five of Bashtar's domains – each of which features a particular style of scenery – find this wizardy bloke and duff him up a treat. Only then will he be reunited with Miho and be rid of all that unsightly body hair. But the route to Bashtar's lair is laden with natural hazards, devious traps and all manner of hostile creatures, which Toki has to negotiate, avoid and kill (in that order).

Our simian chum is quite an agile chappie. True, he drags his knuckles a bit when he walks but he can jump quite a bit and climbs vines like you wouldn't believe. He also possesses an uncanny ability to. . . well, *gob*, with incredible accuracy, too. This high-velocity spit does untold damage to his adversaries: hit 'em with enough saliva and they'll disappear for good.

Once again, Ocean have chosen wisely in their quest for conversions: the relatively simple gameplay in *Toki* has transferred very well indeed from arcade to eight-bit. The only concessions to quality lie in the lack of parallax scrolling (big deal) and a reduction in the speed at which everything moves (so what?).

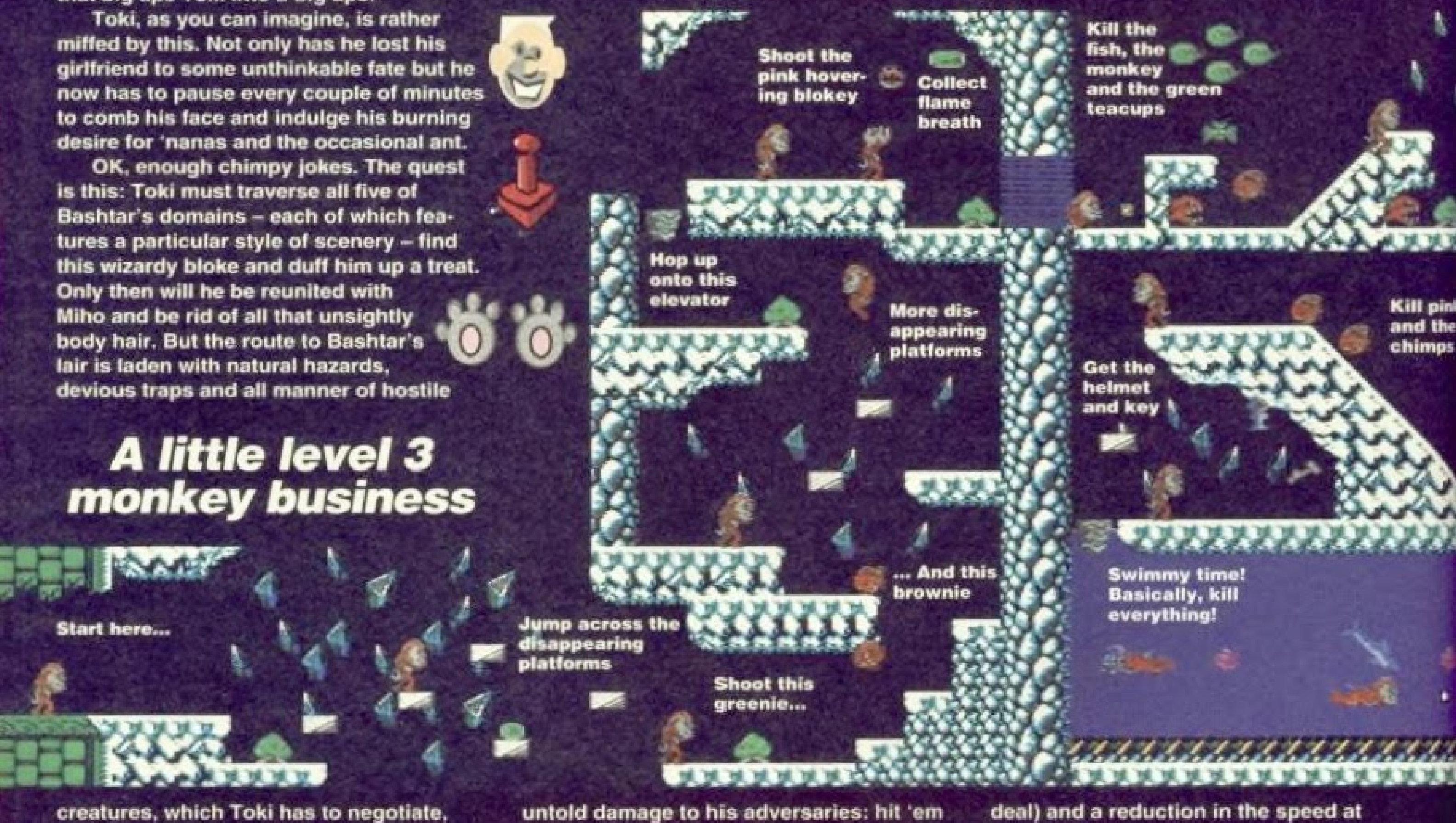
The varied backdrops are very pretty indeed and all the features of the gameplay are there, from giant guardians to exploding plants to disappearing platforms. There are some niggling faults, such as poor choices of restart points (several are almost instantly fatal) and inconsistent collision detection, but, most importantly, *Toki* is a lot of fun to play.

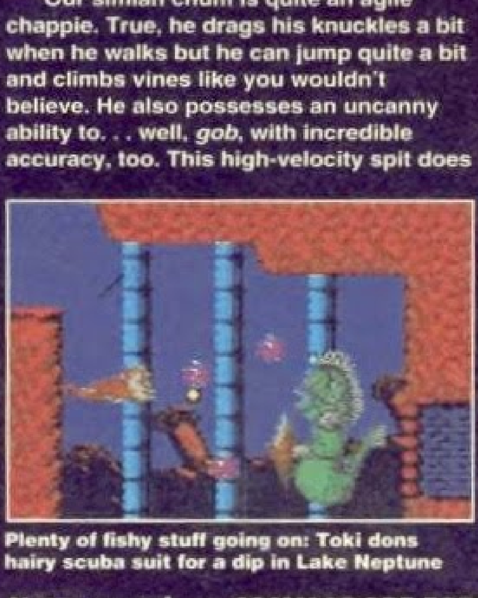
In fact, the high addiction level is possibly it's major downfall: there are only five levels and it doesn't take that long to get a handle on most of the trickier bits. Then it's down to the end-of-level guardians to put up the last of the fight.

With five lives and two continue options, it's only a matter of time before our hero is back in the pink. But until then, sit back and enjoy the challenge.

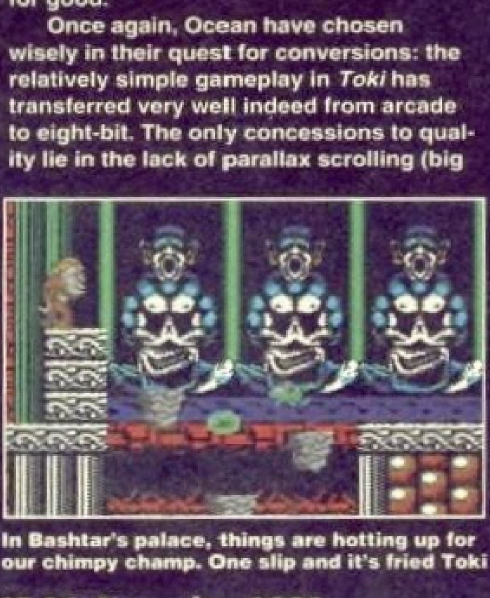
STEVE

A little level 3 monkey business

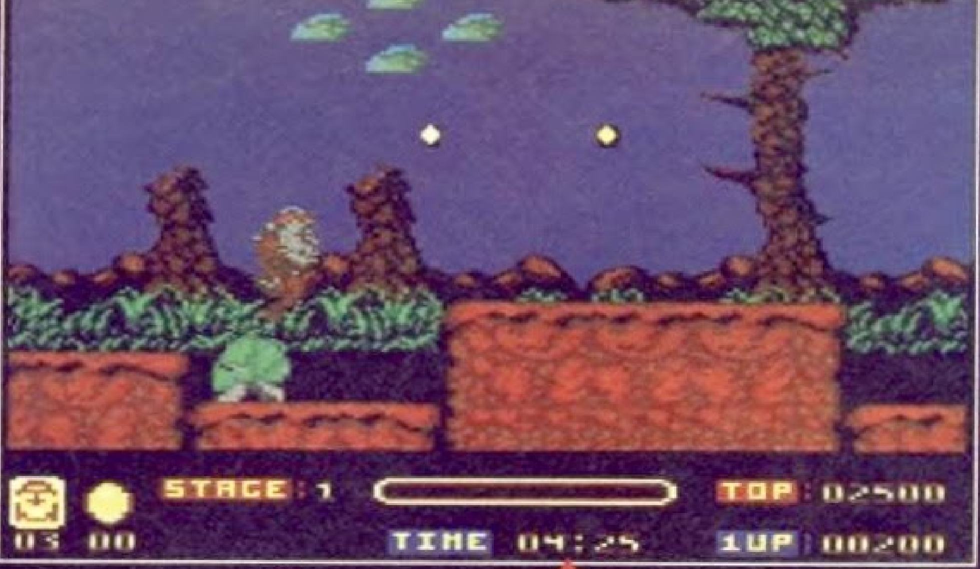

Shoot the pink hovering blokey
Collect flame breath
Kill the fish, the monkey and the green teacups
Hop up onto this elevator
More disappearing platforms
Kill pin
and the
chimps
Get the helmet and key
... And this brownie
Swimmy time! Basically, kill everything!
Start here...
Jump across the disappearing platforms
Shoot this greenie...



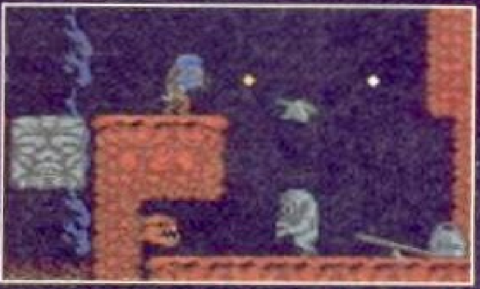
Plenty of fishy stuff going on: Toki dons hairy scuba suit for a dip in Lake Neptune



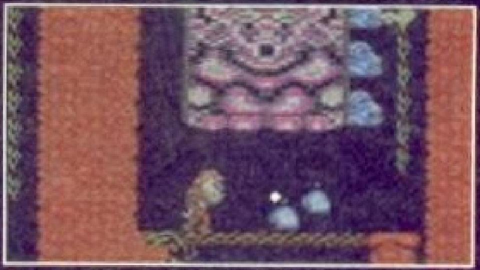
In Bashtar's palace, things are hotting up for our chimpy champ. One slip and it's fried Toki



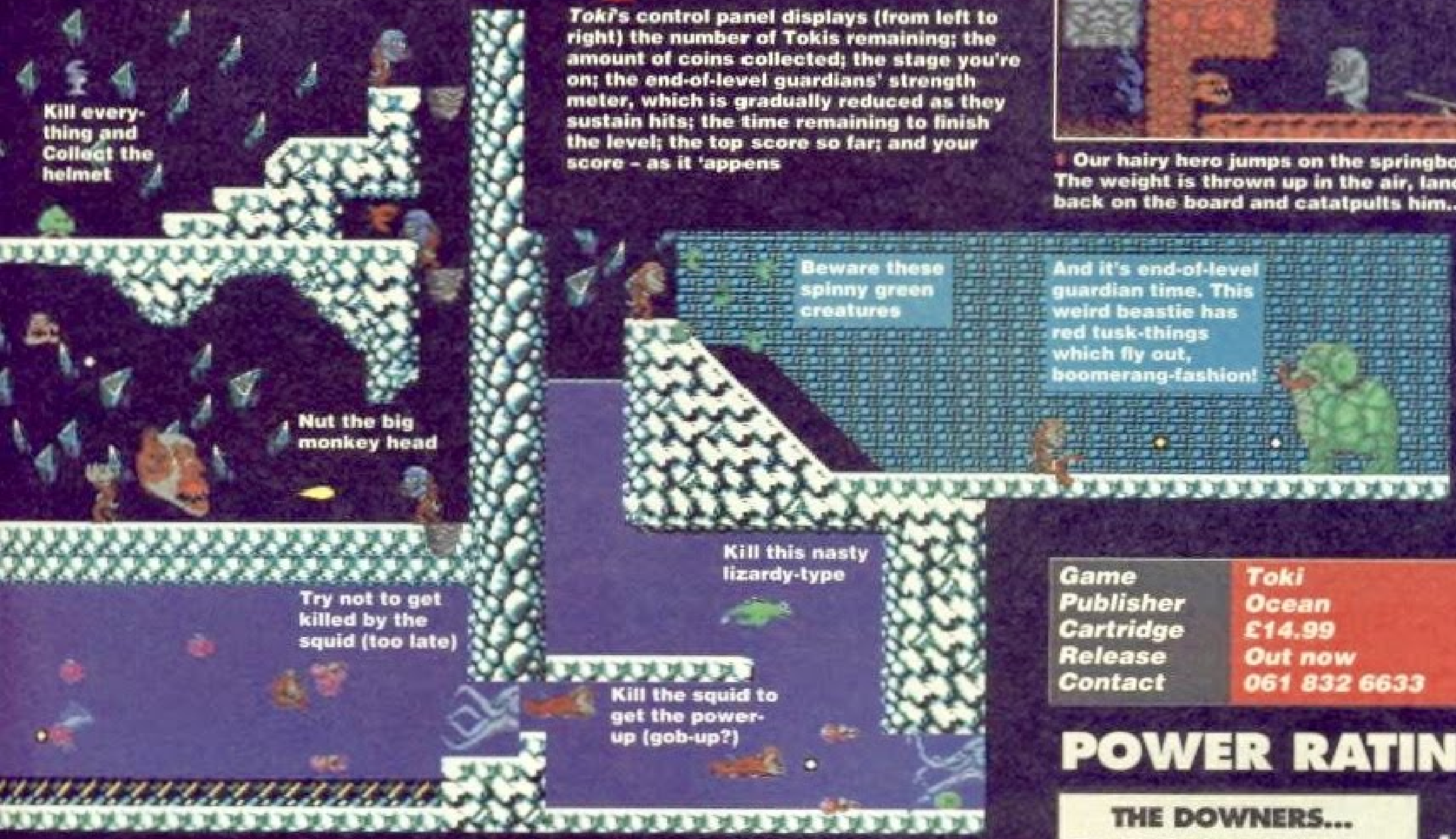
Toki's control panel displays (from left to right) the number of Tokis remaining; the amount of coins collected; the stage you're on; the end-of-level guardians' strength meter, which is gradually reduced as they sustain hits; the time remaining to finish the level; the top score so far; and your score – as it 'appens



1 Our hairy hero jumps on the springboard. The weight is thrown up in the air, lands back on the board and catatpults him...



2 ... Up to a higher platform where he can face this enormous, erm, thingy



Kill everything and Collect the helmet

Beware these spinny green creatures

And it's end-of-level guardian time. This weird beastie has red tusk-things which fly out, boomerang-fashion!

Nut the big monkey head

Kill this nasty lizardy-type

Try not to get killed by the squid (too late)

Kill the squid to get the power-up (gob-up?)

Game	*Toki*
Publisher	*Ocean*
Cartridge	*£14.99*
Release	*Out now*
Contact	*061 832 6633*

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Just five levels – and only the guardians offer much resistance
- Spot effects are dire

100

86%

0

- **Great graphics throughout, with heaps of colour and loads of variety**
- **Arcade-style platform action is extremely playable and very addictive**
- **Thankfully, the soundtrack is a decent alternative to FX**
- **There are plenty of surprises in traps and enemies waiting round each corner!**
- **There are some major heavies to face**
- **Toki has a wide range of moves at his command – all accessed with little hassle**
- **A very affordable cartridge**

...AND THE UPPERS

TOKI TOKENS

BIG GOB – Increases the strength (and damage sustained) of Toki's facial emissions

FIREGOB – Powerful flame-breath, but with horribly short range

TWIN GOB – Doubles up on Toki's spittle missile, sending waves of mucus towards the enemy

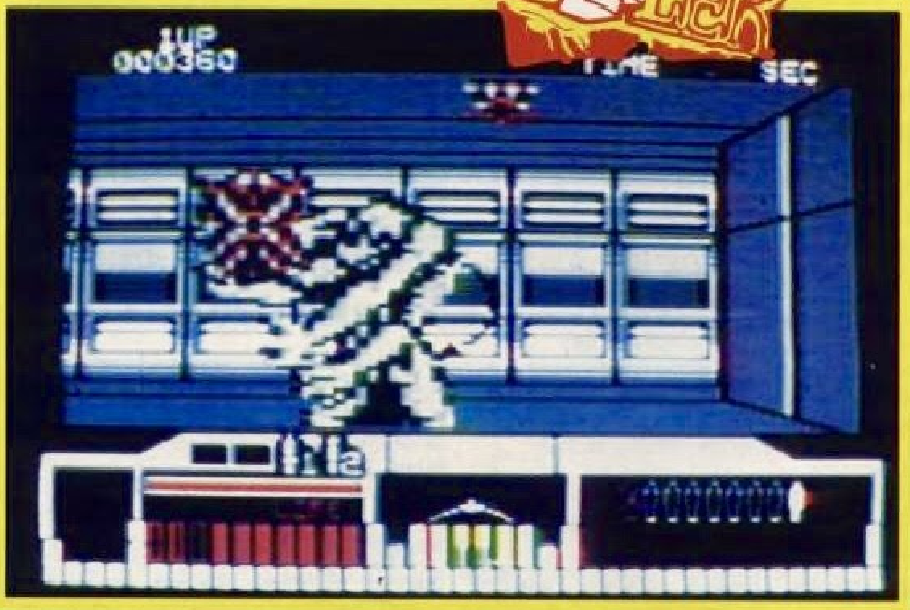
HELMET – Protects our ape man from attack – but only temporarily. Also, it only prevents damage to his bonce. Cop a shot on his lower half, and he's an un-funky monkey

Space Gu

Most of you have seen the movies *Alien* and *Aliens* where huge nightmarish creatures ripped the shite out of all and sundry and burst out of peoples chests (bleurgh). The creatures in Ocean's *Space Gun* ain't much better, but MARK 'WHUP ALIEN ASS' CASWELL is on hand with a 10mm Pulse Rifle, a clean pair of undies and a copy of 'Huge Guns And Xenophobes Monthly'...

● Ocean £14.99 cart

SIZZLER



● Blast those suckers or they'll bleed you dry, and that big greenie'll maul you with his big arms.

We might think people who claim to see little green men are one marble short of a bagful. But this game just goes to prove that certain members of the ZZAP! office (no names mentioned, how's it going Ian?) aren't the ugliest creatures in the universe.

Space Gun is set in the year 2039, and is a one or two player game where you become a hard-assed Colonial Marine for the day. Y'see there's this bunch of nasty buggy-eye aliens (Lucy's relatives?) (bog off Rat fink — Lucy) who want to enslave the human race. And it's your job to stop 'em matey (and you're welcome to it — Ed).

Dinner is served

The first part of your mission is to rescue a bunch of civilians from an orbiting space station. They were minding their own business when the bug-eyed beasties attacked, but now they're din-dins unless you help.

At least one hostage must be saved in each section, against a vicious time limit. If you screw up and torch the lot of them it's goodnight universe, and game over. But for rescuing all the humans in each section you're awarded an extra credit (you start the game with three).

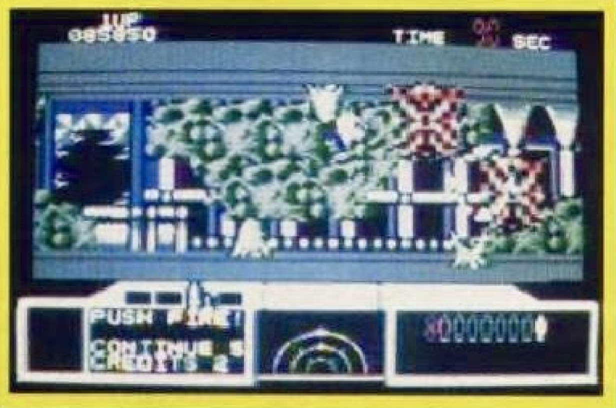
The game's viewed through the eyes of the character and scrolls both horizontally and vertically (no, not at the same time you twit). But the aliens ain't going to let you take away their dinner so easily. Very soon several thousand pounds of alien warrior is trying to rip your goddamn head off.

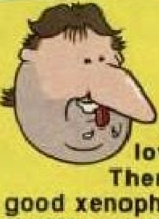
So now's a good time to press the fire button... hold on, you've got to aim the gun first. An on-screen free-floating cursor pinpoints the direction of your bullets, so let rip (luckily ammo's unlimited).

Who's next for a cordite sandwich?

The best tactic's to shoot at anything whether it moves or not, 'cos there are handy icons

● It's green and it's slimy and it's not Corky! Looks a bit like Stain Osborne though!





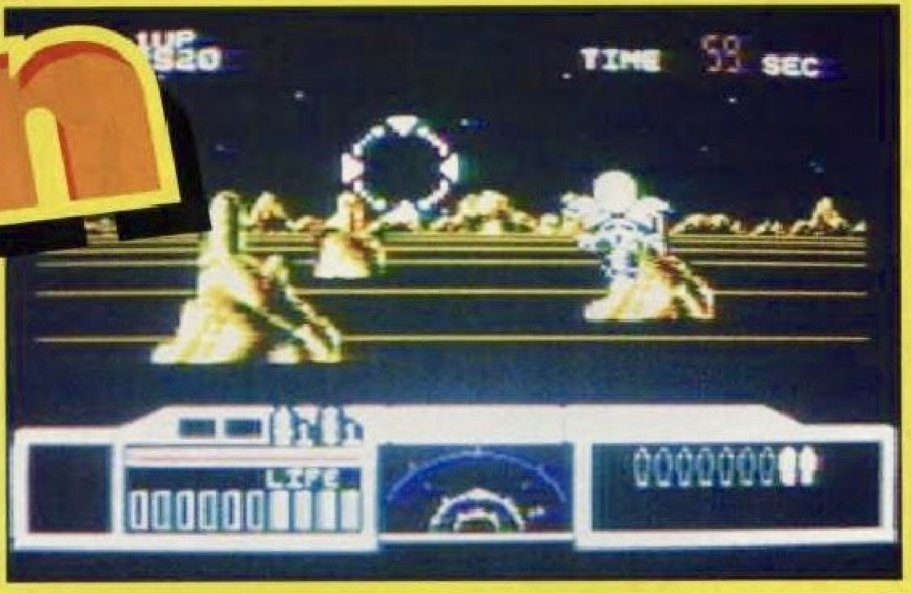
Phil!

● Aliens, don't ya just love to hate 'em? There's nothing like a good xenophobic blast; perhaps that's why *Space Gun* is much more fun than its old military counterpart, *Op Wolf*. Walking down claustrophobic corridors, not knowing what's going to leap out at you next, is dead spooky.

The aliens are big scary buggers too (a bit like Corky!), popping out to maul you with their ugly claws and suckers — urrrghhhh! Unfortunately you can't blast their arms off like in the coin-op but it's still very satisfying to pump them with so much ammo they explode. You can't afford to just hammer the fire button, though, as there are those hostages to rescue, and your gun recharge rate is rapidly reduced — ha, that'll beat those autofire cheats!

The classic blasting gameplay is instantly addictive, combining with truly grotesque graphics to make a creepy, compulsive cart. *Space Gun* reaches out and grabs you by the throat — it's a bit like Lucy near our deadline, really!

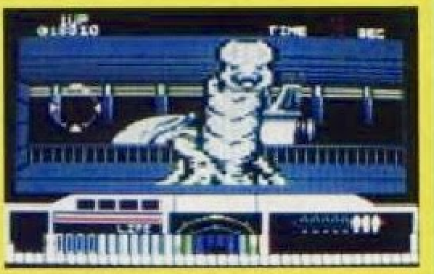
94%



● Out on the planet's surface with the aliens now hiding behind rocks. Blast the crap out of 'em and you can go home for tea!

waiting to be discovered. These include bombs, a flame thrower, grenades, a freeze gun and extra energy. So you do at least have a fighting chance (if you believe that, you'll believe anything).

> **'The creatures rip you to shreds without mercy'**



As you battle with the bug-eyed hordes your obligatory energy level plummets floorwards (closely followed by you). There are two main types of critters, big fat barsts who try to bite or slash you with their claws (anyone for a manicure?). And smaller Alien-esque 'face hugger' creatures, who cling to your face every chance they get (yuck).

Once a huge end-of-level guardian has been blasted to hell and back, it's down to the surface of the nearest planet in your little shuttle craft.

Here you zoom along a vertically scrolling screen, blasting the crap out of attacking meanies… and saving hostages of course (you really are a vicious git). You then blast your way through the two levels of a colonial base, before returning to your shuttle. But the game isn't quite over yet, because in the last level, the monstrosities wait in the shuttle to ambush you from behind the sofa.

Let's play hide and seek with Mr Alien

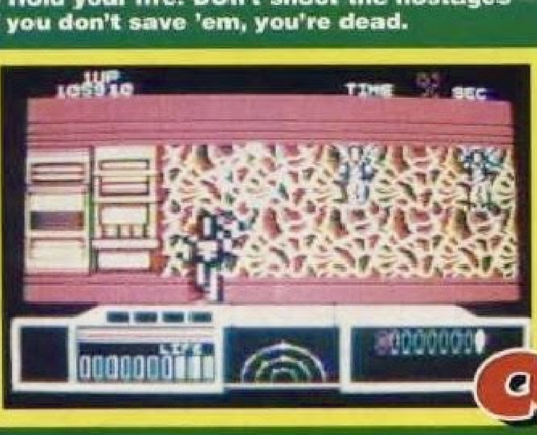
Here you are facing the cockpit of the shuttle, the idea is to mangle the aliens without shooting up the cabin (a mega BOOOM! is the result of lead-riddled instrument panels). So there you have it, *Space Gun* is a blast-'em-up fan's dream come true.

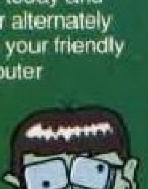
The creatures rip you to shreds without mercy (any mercy jokes will be repaid by a trip to loose tooth city), and for many games I had the stuffing kicked out of me (news of that will please Lucy).

Graphically the game's up to Images' high standards (smarm, grovel — I hope the cheque's in the post guys), with a great deal of angst generated when the brilliantly drawn and animated aliens leap out at your character (ah, so that's what the clean undies are for — Managing Ed).

So what are you waiting for, join the Colonial Marines today and save the universe. Or alternately buy *Space Gun* from your friendly neighbourhood computer shop, at least you won't have to invite the aliens round for tea afterwards.

● Hold your fire! DOn't shoot the hostages — if you don't save 'em, you're dead.





Corky! 90%

TEN (NOT VERY) INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ALIENS

● 1. They burst out of people's chests and thus run up huge dry-cleaning bills.
● 2. They mutilate cattle to make their own hamburgers, better than the crap they put in a Big Mac.
● 3. Only the big and very ugly aliens appear before humans, this is because they enjoy scaring the shite out of them.
● 4. Aliens don't speak English, this is unfortunate because they've been asking for directions to **THAT** Welsh village that no-one can pronounce the name of for years.
● 5. If an alien walks up to you in the street and asks you to take him to your leader, don't worry it's quite normal behaviour. They might do a better job than the Conservative Party as well.
● 6. They become editors of comic books, ie The Mighty Tharg on 2000 AD.
● 7. Their favourite newspaper is the Sunday Sport, that's where they find news of their lost friends.
● 8. For ages aliens have been accused of abducting humans from the Bermuda Triangle. In fact they too have become lost trying to find that bloody Welsh village.
● 9. They enjoy flashing their spaceship lights, thus giving the Sunday Sport something to write about (apart from top-heavy birds flashing their knockers — Ed).
● 10. All of the alien spaceships are reported as cigar shaped. If this is a fact what shape are their cigars?

The guilty party

● An Images Production

TEST YOUR STRENGTH!

PRESENTATION
Handy two-player option and ace interlevel screens **92%**

GRAPHICS
Colourful backdrops, the aliens are animated superbly **92%**

SOUND
Moody soundtrack adds to the spooky atmosphere **88%**

HOOKABILITY
From the first alien attack Space Gun is xeno-phobic fun **93%**

LASTABILITY
You can't quit until the last bug-eyed monster is dead! **91%**

OVERALL STRIKE! 92%

RoboCo

• £14.99 cart

Already partially made of chips, and dead from the neck up (plus the trouser department!), PHIL KING puts a saucepan on his head and wires himself up to a C64 epic...

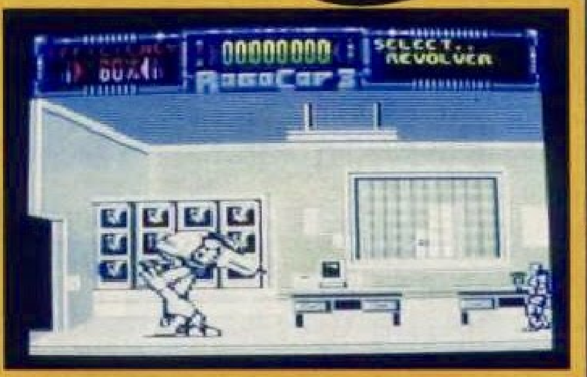
Long gone are the days when friendly PC Plod used to cycle around cobbled streets singing 'A hey nonny no', laughing uncontrollably and only stopping now and again to give thick ears to cheeky kiddies (how generous!).

I can't imagine RoboCop doing that — although he did ride a bike in the *RoboCop 2* film! This 21st Century cyborg (half dead copper, half tin can) goes about his business with calculating precision, giving offenders 20 seconds to comply or die.

Thankfully, Robo's programmed to be a good guy and all his actions are governed by the famous three prime directives:

- 1 — Always let royalty off speeding offences
- 2 — Fit up Irish labourers on dodgy forensic evidence
- 3 — Stop innocent motorists with no car tax (it was in the post, honest! — Claire)

Erm... whoops, those are the West Mercia police's orders! Their 21st century counterparts in Old Detroit are far more sinister — even if they don't grow beards and talk to God.



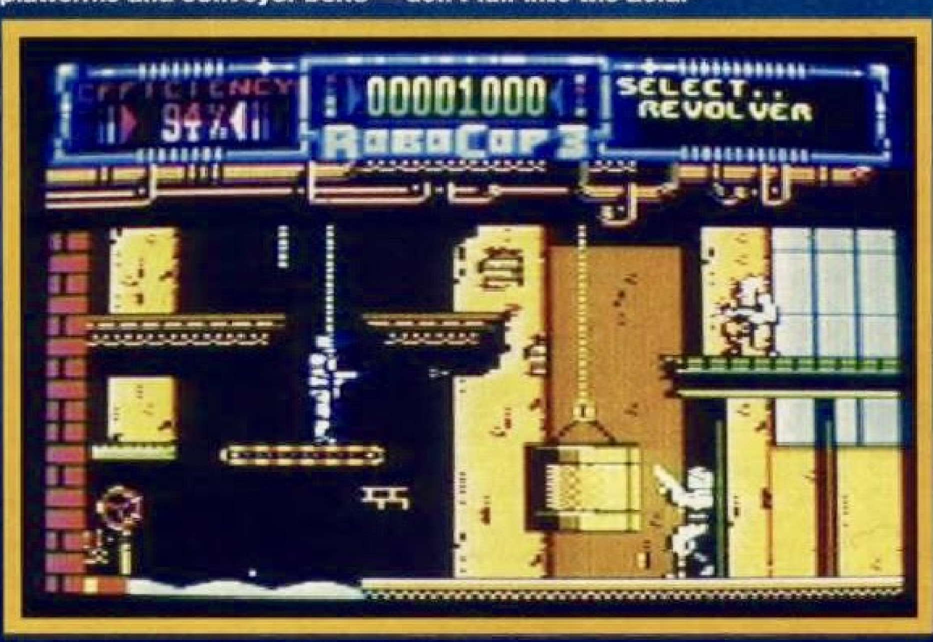
• Uh oh, it's Edd The Duck!... Erm, well something almost as scary, ED-209!

No, these guys are corrupt as they come — the police department's privatised and run by OmniConsumer Products (OCP). In the first film (and game) OCP were helping a local drugs baron, in the second they instigated a crime wave to force the city into bankruptcy.

'Robo's got a new weapons arm'

Now, they've come up with a new solution to the problems of homelessness and poverty: hire mercenaries to eliminate the poor (sounds logical)! The situation is further complicated by a bunch of Japs trying to take over OCP, bringing over a bunch of robotic ninjas.('selve the pubric tlust... plotect the innocent... uphord the raw!').

• Level Two has Robo aiming his gun at loadsa baddies and jumping onto platforms and conveyor belts — don't fall into the acid!



Splattering punks

The first of five levels is *Op Wolf* revisited with a targeting cursor to aim; the screen scrolls left/right as the cursor nears the edge.

It's a lovely moonlit ni't in the city, or it would be but for the splatterpunks who pop out from behind buildings — in the foreground and background — and occasionally appear at windows.

These guys have got guns as big as their muscles (mmm, yum yum — Man. Ed) which they blast away to reduce Robo's efficiency level. Replenish this only at the end of each level, using Repair Tokens shot on Robo's head, body, arms and legs.

One quick oil change later, Robo explores the horizontally scrolling Rocket Motors factory: a familiar scene to *RoboCop 2* fans with its platforms and conveyor belts to bound around on.

Robo crouches and aims his gun in all directions. He's now got a new weapons arm fitted with a flame thrower (great for short-range battles), laser (powerful with long range), guided missiles (automatically homing in on enemies) or tin-can opener (only kidding!). Collect the right icon to claim each weapon. Pressing space exchanges them — but there's only limited ammo, so be sparing!

Robo dons a jetpack to float through Level 3. Control here's a bit tricky with realistic inertia as Robo blasts jetpack-clad down and outers. After clobbering a huge end-level tank, Robo finds he's run out of gas (don't you just hate it when that happens — Man. Ed)!

With not a tin of curried beans in sight, he's no choice but to trundle back to the OCP tower on Level 4. Following a close shave with a huge strafing helicopter (I prefer a Bic myself) Robo battles with his arch-enemy, ED-209 — nine sprites gorgeously animated (eight frames), with clever shading giving it convincing solidity.

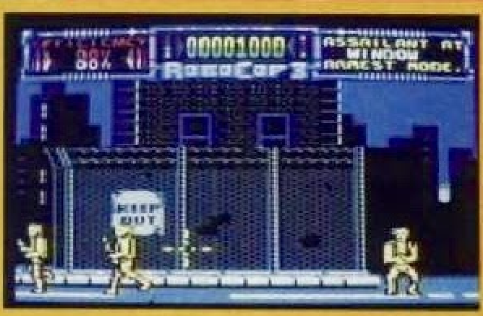
Finally it's climb-a-tower time, the screen scrolling upwards to show the next floor, to knock the stuffing out of those acrobatic robotic ninjas.

Movie magic

Yes, Ocean have 'served the public trust' yet again with a licence that oozes quality from start to finish. Once again, cartridge power has been used to the full to provide instant loading and an astonishing variety of graphics — which would normally cause a nightmare tape multiload.

TEN FAMOUS ROBO THINGIES

- **1. Twiki** — the annoying silver mechanical midget in Buck Rogers who kept going, 'Beedee beedee beedee!'
- **2. Metal Mickey** — famous for calling Irene Handl a 'fruit bat' and eating those weird sweets.
- **3. Cybermen** — silly-looking cyborgs from 'Dr Who', with silly handlebar ears!
- **4. Daleks** — recycled dustbins and sink plungers with well-known catchphrase, 'Exterminate!'; sound just like British Rail announcers!
- **5. Robbie The Robot** — lovable character who appeared in the 'Forbidden Planet' movie and 'Lost In Space' TV series.
- **6. Data** — from 'Star Trek: The Next Generation', the one who looks like he's just seen a ghost.
- **7. K9** — Doctor Who's best friend, until he kept spraying oil all over the control column!
- **8. R2-D2** — little guy on wheels who swears so much they don't stop using the bleeper on him!
- **9. Marvin** — from 'Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy', with brain the size of a small planet and a persecution complex the size of a small sun.
- **10. John Major** — whoops, sorry, don't know how that got there!



● *Op Wolf*-style shooting in Level 1: lock your targeting cursor on those punks' heads and blast!

Graphic detail is superb, both in the excellent colourful backdrops and the smoothly animated sprites — especially the bigguns.

There's also the now-expected top-notch presentation with a neat intro and cracking interlevel repair sequence — even if Robo looks like he's sitting on the loo (even dead coppers have to go sometime y'know — Man. Ed)! Not to mention a moody Jeroen Tel (ex-Maniacs Of Noise) soundtrack to add extra atmosphere to a true movie experience.

It plays as good as it looks with familiar, instantly addictive blasting action on the *Op Wolf*-style first level. Of course, the three walk-along-and-shoot levels are just as familiar to fans of the previous games. Improved, more realistic weapons add a tactical element — knowing where best to use them is essential for progress.

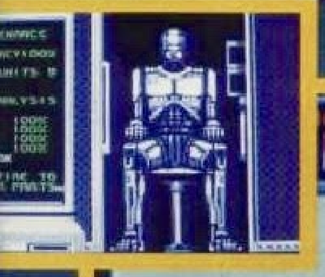
Five levels may not seem much, but they're certainly long enough with loads of big-baddie confrontations. The jetpack level's a successful addition and frankly I'm glad to see the back of those fiddly puzzle subgames which detracted from the overall atmosphere in *2*.

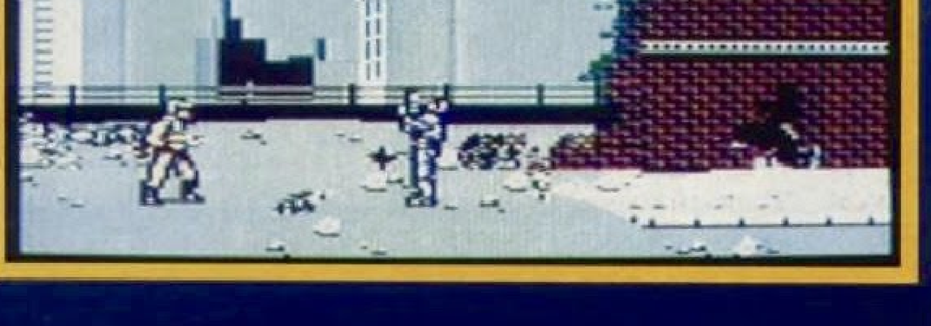
RoboCop 3 is action all the way, and should keep even the most expert gameplayers protecting the innocent for ages — just make sure you've got a large enough supply of baby food!

Phil! 91%

The guilty parties

- **A Probe Production**
- **Program: Neil Coxhead**
- **Graphics: Hugh Riley**
- **Music: Jeroen Tel**





● With no gas, Robo must walk through Level 4 (Below), it's a big job even for him so he needs interlevel repairs (Left).

Corky!

● I bet the Blue Peter team were happy when RoboCop was melted down (along with the odd Skoda) to provide a few tins for their old fogie appeal. Don't worry readers I'm only kidding, old tin bonce is back in his third game (and very soon third movie). Well, there are elephants... sorry, *elements* of the previous two games in *RoboCop 3*, and it's very spiffy indeed. Robo's old enemy ED-209 (even deadlier than ED-P.H.I.L.) pops up for a goodly scrap, and as always makes everyone's life complete misery. The title sequence is a corker (but what else do you expect from Probe?), though the rest of the game isn't too shoddy either. For my money, the difficulty setting is a touch too high on the first couple of levels — I only just made it through Level One after umpteen games, and cheating with an autofire stick (blinkin' girl's blouse — Man Ed). But with practice Robo is soon blasting all and sundry with his very impressive weapon (!!?). Thank gawd I'm one of the innocent citizens that Robo protects.

93%

TEST YOUR STRENGTH!

DING DONG!

FREEZING! TINGLING! RINGING! SIZZLING!

PRESENTATION
Neat intro and repair scene. Instant cart loading. **88%**

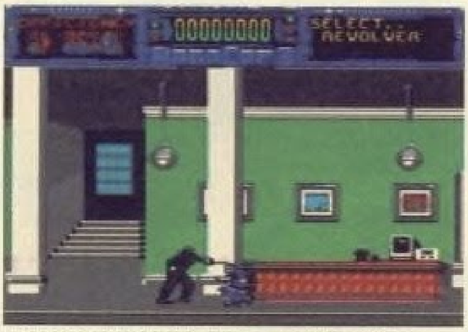
GRAPHICS
Attractive backdrops and smoothly animated sprites. **92%**

SOUND
Classic Jeroen Tel music accompanies all levels **90%**

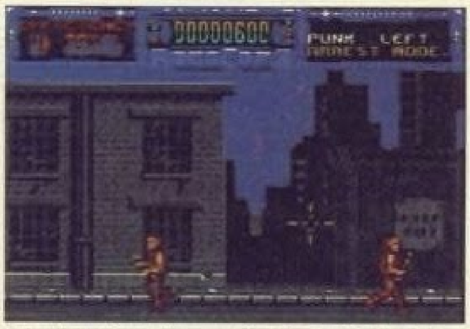
HOOKABILITY
Megablasting first level gets you in the mood. **93%**

LASTABILITY
Only five levels but they're big and pretty tough. **91%**

OVERALL STRIKE! 92%



RoboCop falls to his knees and begs the Ninja Droid not to smack his head in again.



Robo's on-board computer (top right) tells him which punk is the biggest threat. Arrest mode simply means 'shoot them all'.

ROBO

Every time RoboCop cleans up Detroit, somebody comes along and makes it all messy again. It seems to be a never-ending task for the poor metal guy, blasting punks and destroying corrupt organisations. Still, I'll bet the pay is good and he doesn't have to work at weekends!

CART GAME

Hmm. So we move on to the third part of the Alex Murphy saga. All you basically need to know is that a new, shining Detroit called Delta City has been built by the OCP Organisation, who, being nasty and mean, have installed lots of baddies in it. If you're really into plot structures and stuff, read the Does *RoboCop 3* Have A Plot Then? box elsewhere on the page. Or, better still, go and see the movie. Anyway, the point is Delta City's completely packed with baddies. Guess who's got to go and root them all out? Yep. You've got it in one.

The game, true to all licences, doesn't have a huge amount in common with the film's plot, but follows it roughly as you play through the five levels.

If you're a fan of Ocean's previous *RoboCop*-based efforts, there will be much here to make you feel at home. But it isn't just a case of the same game recycled. Oh dear me, no. For example, the first level is a sort of *Op Wolf*-style sideways scrolling blaster, which involves you moving your computer-assisted gunsight around the streets and targeting splatterpunks, then blasting them.

You're going to see a lot of splatterpunks in this game. These are the guys who inhabit the city, carry guns and hate cops (especially ones made of metallic substances). You can move your sights up and down, and the screen left and right. The idea is that you've got to take out all the dangerous guys first, before they stop running around in a panic and start firing their shotguns at you. Every time you're hit it eats into your efficiency percentage.

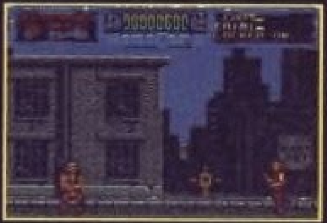
It's a fast, accurate section, with your sights whizzing back and forth as you follow the guidance given at the top right of the screen, which tells you where the nearest baddies are. If you're clever you'll find the perfect height to position the sights, thus taking out bad dudes in the foreground and those dashing around in the background in one sweep. This makes things both easier and rather more boring. You can just whizz from side to side, firing rapidly all the time, and everyone will soon die.

Also available as pick-ups that you've got to shoot are Repair bonuses. Collect these and you can get yourself fixed up at the end of the level. If you can get four or five you should be 100% ready for the next attack wave. Collecting them means you've got to move the sights up and down more, which means you can't leave them in the central perfect position for punk-killing.

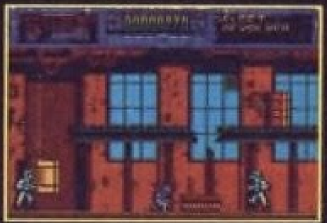
Level two is traditional *RoboCop* fare. You enter a rocket-motor factory-type industrial place and walk from left to right (seen

RoboCop 3 - the levels

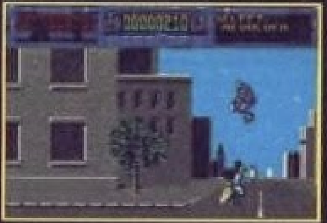
With five large levels of robot-related mayhem, all we can say is "Thank goodness it's on a cartridge. Multi-loading *RoboCop 3* would have been a nightmare on cassette...



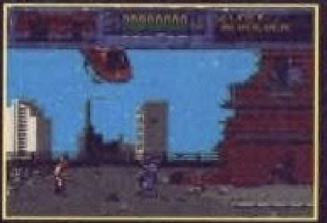
Level One. It's an *Op Wolf*-style shooter. But you've got infinite ammo and a decent targeting system.



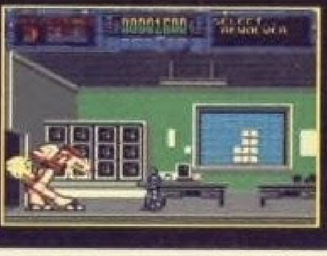
Level Two. In the factory, Robo ducks to avoid the cross-fire of a couple of nasties. Neat idea, that, eh?



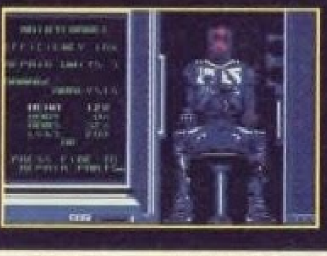
Level Three. That jetpack's nice and useful. Sadly, your enemies have got hold of the dratted things too.



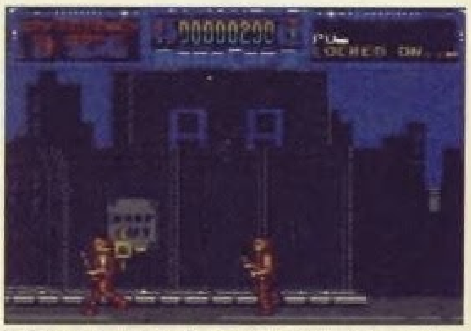
Level Four. The jetpack-related fun is over and as you walk home a large helicopter attacks you. Life's tough.



Level five. Back at the Office Robo' beats off some ninja robots then discusses corporate politics with his mate Ed.

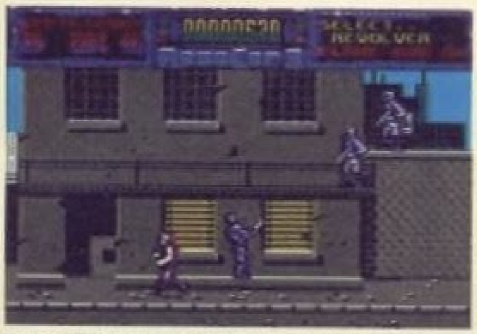


The Repair Screen. Robo's looking a bit damaged, so he'll be wanting a good sit down. This stool will do.

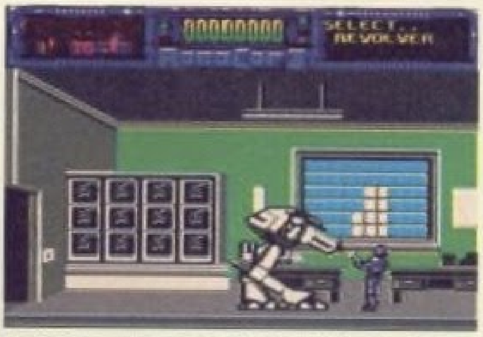


Splatterpunks rush around, trying to avoid your fire. But ha ha, there's no place to hide, guys! The targeting system has you locked.

COP 3



Oh dear. These gentlemen seem to have picked the wrong person to have a fight with. *RoboCop* is in a mean mood, too.



Robo has a face-to-face chat with Mr. 209. He explains that, though he's smaller and not as well armed, he's got God on his side.

from side-view) and blast everybody you see on various platforms. As well as splatter-punks, you'll come across rehab's. What these are (and what they do) isn't made clear, but if you treat them as normal baddies and kill them all you can't go wrong. You can fire in eight directions, so as long as you're quick you should wipe out most of the baddies before they do you any serious damage.

Making things a bit (oh, all right, a lot) harder are the acid baths and moving conveyor belts you have to get past. This adds a lot of fun and game-play to level two - you've got to contend with all manner of traps while still trying to blow the various nasties away. Luckily there are extra weapons (and more repair bonuses) available.

In level three, you've nicked a jet pack from the factory. Other baddies have jet packs of their own, so you get into some fast and furious air-to-air combat, swooping, diving and shooting like some WW2 ace *(er, I don't really think so - Ed)*.

Kill everyone and you get to meet an armoured tank. This is where your missiles come in useful. Missiles? Yes, you should have picked them up about five screens back. Avoid the tank's fire and blow holes in it using your brand new, spanky and rather high-tech guided weaponry. Hooray!

RoboCop must then walk back the way he's just flown, heading for the OCP tower. More splatterpunks get in his way (and his sights). And a massive helicopter swoops down to take a few pot-shots at young Mr Murphy. If you can get your metal mate to the entrance of the tower, there's an ED 209 waiting there to turn him into iron-filings.

> **Delta City's completely packed with baddies. Guess who's got to go and root them all out?**

If by some miracle you survive all this mayhem, it's time for level five. Our tin chum must fight his way to the top of the tower, by battling Otomo Ninja Robots. Never heard of 'em? You should have. They're robotic ninja from, erm, the small seaside town of Otomo (just down the coast from Skegness).

It's impossible to outrun the Otomo Ninjas. They close in and whack you with their sticks, causing massive damage. All you can do is keep firing and hope they die soon.

Get past them and there's another ED 209. Kill him and hey presto! You've won and can go home for tea, muffins and a recharge.

RoboCop 3 is a biggie. It's got that mega-licence feel to it, and the multi-loading levels will give you many serious hours of gameplay before you can beat them. Levels two, four and five are, it must be said, rather similar to those of its predecessors - with plenty of baddies, lots of shooting and slow walks from left to right across the screen.

The whole thing is certainly high quality, though. There's an awful lot going on and it's all got good graphics and plenty of gameplay. Perhaps not earth-shattering, but certainly great to settle down with for a few hours.

One thing - RoboCop 3 won't be easy to finish. I'll be surprised if the whole game can be complete in a few days. There are weeks worth of shooting here. This has got to be good news for hardened players in the long-term, but it's quite annoying when you first load up and play, especially in you wanted to lowered into the game gently.

JAMES LEACH

Game	**RoboCop 3**
Publisher	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£14.99**
Release	**Mid February**
Contact	**061 832 6633**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- **It's certainly got more than a passing resemblance to the other RoboCops.**
- **It's also rather tough.**
- **And sometimes a bit slow.**

100

70%

0

- **Superb intro sequence sets the tone for the whole game.**
- **Sound effects add a lot to the atmosphere.**
- **It's fast, furious and there's a great deal of shooting to be getting on with.**
- **Five levels, each with their own style of game-play keep your interest.**
- **The graphics are smooth and clear. It's at least as good-looking as the other RoboCops, if not better.**

...AND THE UPPERS

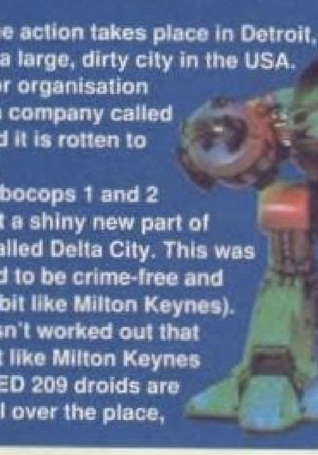
Does Robocop 3 have a plot then?

For those who can't wait for the film (which should be out in the next couple of months), here's a brief look at the plot.

Right. The action takes place in Detroit, which is a large, dirty city in the USA. The major organisation there is a company called OCP. And it is rotten to the core.

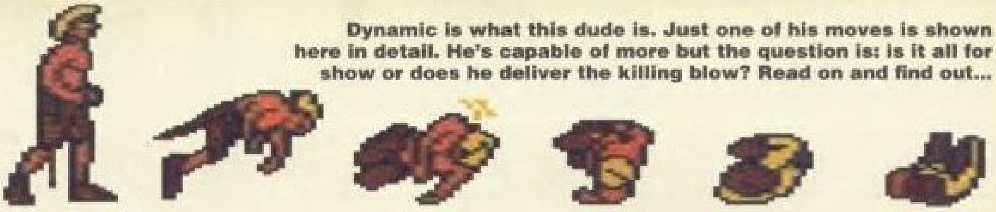
In Robocops 1 and 2 OCP built a shiny new part of Detroit called Delta City. This was supposed to be crime-free and idyllic (a bit like Milton Keynes). But it hasn't worked out that way (a bit like Milton Keynes as well). ED 209 droids are posted all over the place, splatterpunks roam free, pulling aerials off cars and throwing stones, and it's generally not nice. Even RoboCop is having a spot of trouble there.

So in step the wily and cunning Japanese (who have been invited by OCP) and, therefore, are incredibly corrupt as well. They bung a load of Otomo Ninja Droids in place and start taking over. RoboCop doesn't like this, so he joins the resistance movement against it and the violence starts.



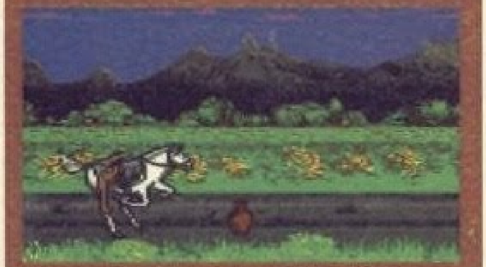
Popcorn, Minstrels and King Cones are available in the foyer, by the way.

Dynamic is what this dude is. Just one of his moves is shown here in detail. He's capable of more but the question is: is it all for show or does he deliver the killing blow? Read on and find out...

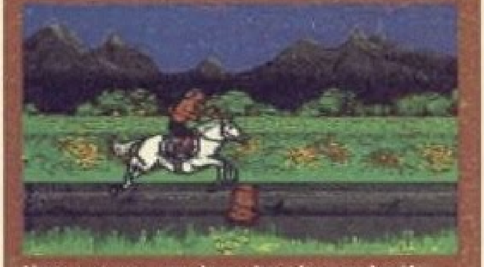


WRATH THE

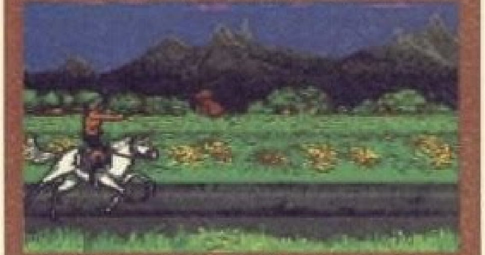
Ride on



Oh very funny I must say. Which joker put Vaseline on my saddle. Actually this is the grab option on level one



Here we see our hero leaping majestically over a tree stump. Mis-time the jumps and he falls flat on his soft parts

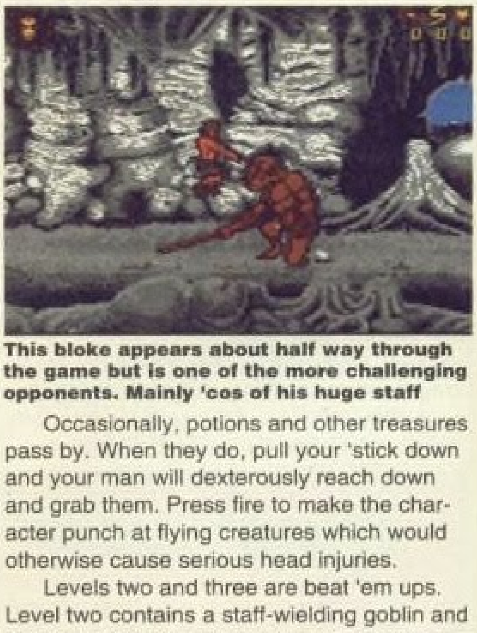


...and for those of you who thought the Hokey-Cokey was just a crap dance. It's dead useful for punching beasts to death

Empire's long-awaited cartridge attempts to over-shadow* Shadow Of The Beast *– so, does it parallax scroll into legend or limp into obscurity? Our reviewer takes up arms and legs it...

I will relate the plot of this game in shorthand as it's far to convoluted and tedious otherwise. Wizard summons demon, demon kills wizard, demon lays waste to land then has a long kip before people return. Demon wakes up in order to lay waste again. People get a bit miffed about it and send best warrior to give demon a good going over. *Wrath of the Demon* is very much a *Shadow of the Beast* clone – not in structure but in the fact that there is less to it than meets the eye, but more on that later.

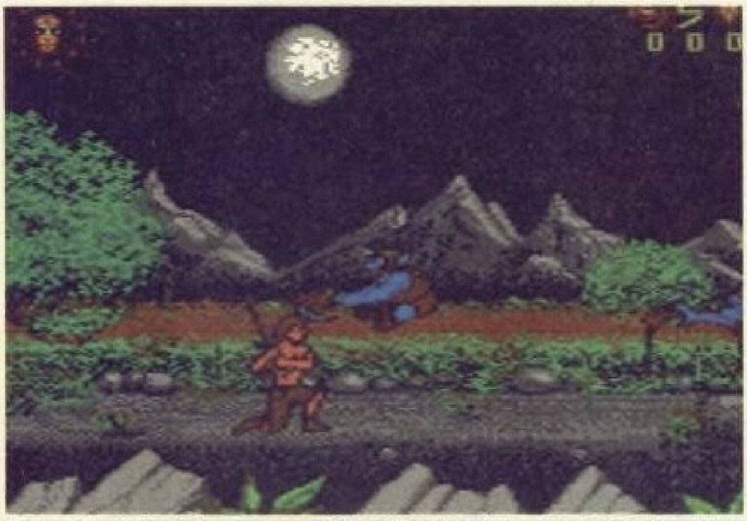
The game unfolds over a series static screen beat-'em-up and scrolly collect-'em-up levels. In level one our hero is on horseback as eight levels of parallax backdrops scroll from right to left. You can move the horse right and left but it's a bit pointless really as the best bet is to stay to the far left to give you plenty of time to see oncoming hazards. Pushing up on your tendril of titillation (*I think he means joystick – Ed*) makes your steed jump to avoid the various crates and rocks scattered about.



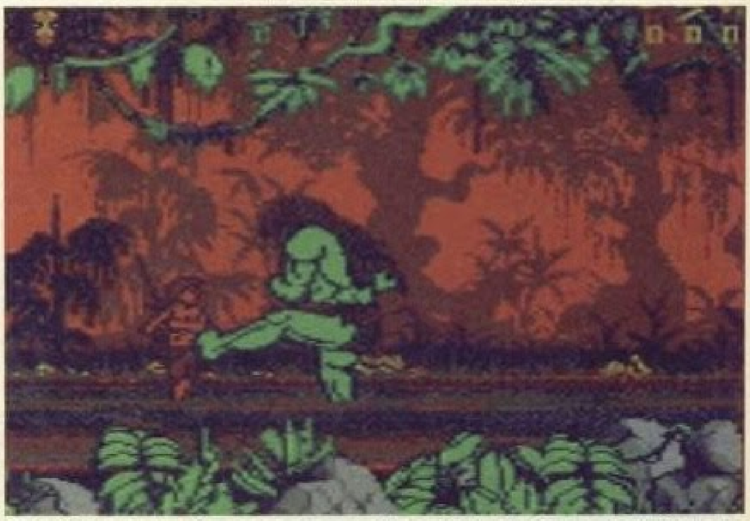
This bloke appears about half way through the game but is one of the more challenging opponents. Mainly 'cos of his huge staff

Occasionally, potions and other treasures pass by. When they do, pull your 'stick down and your man will dexterously reach down and grab them. Press fire to make the character punch at flying creatures which would otherwise cause serious head injuries.

Levels two and three are beat 'em ups. Level two contains a staff-wielding goblin and his stone throwing cohort. Ignore the stone thrower and concentrate your attacks on the

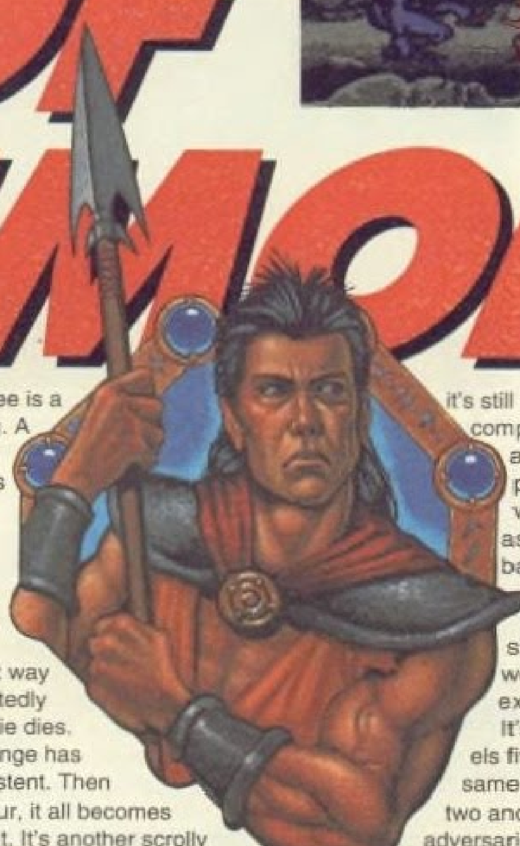


This agile little fellow appears in the first beat 'em up encounter. He's lean, he's green and he's, er rather pathetic. Just get in close and swing like your life depended on it... which it does



Does this guy want a pedicure or a haircut? I've got it, one swift slash across the midriff and he'll never suffer those vanity blues again. To be honest, it takes rather more than one blow to fell this fellow

OF DEMON



other one. Level three is a bit more challenging. A huge green dragon kicks and head butts you into oblivion. Sadly though, his attack patterns are much the same as the goblins. In each case you simply have to find the best way to attack then repeatedly use it until the beastie dies.

So far the challenge has been all but non-existent. Then suddenly, in level four, it all becomes nightmarishly difficult. It's another scrolly bit but this time you're on foot. You can't use your mastery of the sword but have to rely on your ability to perform spectacular rolls, jumps and punches.

Completing this level relies solely on remembering a sequence of hazards which includes horned beasts, giant spikes, worms, huge ants and flying gargoyles. Tragically, even when this is burned into your memory, it's still nigh on impossible to complete. The problem is, ants and worms are a piece of cake to avoid when met head-on. But as soon as you travel back in the other direction they become next to impossible. Bad collision detection mars what would otherwise be an excellent level to play.

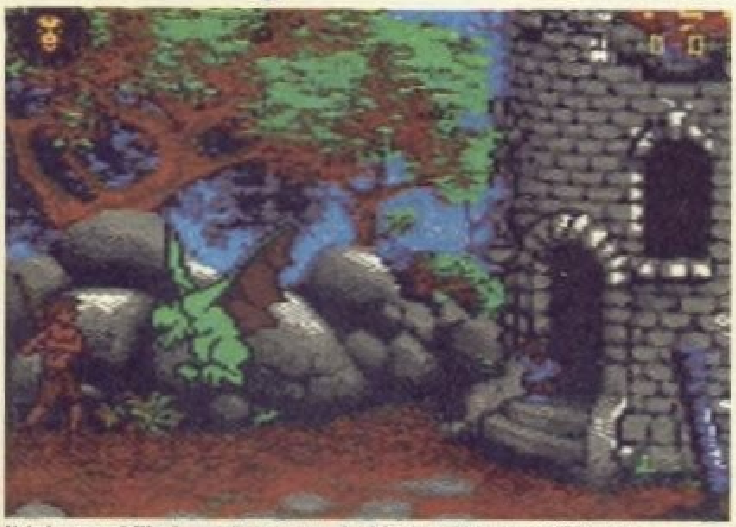
It's fisticuffs again for levels five, six and seven. The same rules apply as for levels two and three except the adversaries have changed. First of comes the huge troll with a stick. Beat him up in the same way as before but watch out, his stick gives him a longer reach. Level six features a swamp beast, a large green man with hippy hair and a powerful foot. The final fight scene is outside the demon's castle and pits you against a mini demon and another stone thrower.

Once you're in the final level – the castle – you have to find and destroy the demon. There's map making potential here as there are doors in the background which you can enter. As you traverse corridors and rooms there are potions to find and minor beasts to kill. Also, before you reach the final encounter, there are two more beat-'em-up rooms.

But enough of this waffle, what of the big guy himself? Well, he's big and spits fire. Lightning bolts shoot from the ceiling and fire spews from the floor. If I were the hero, I'd just nip off home and have a cup of Rosie Lee but for those who can cope with this sort of power, victory awaits.

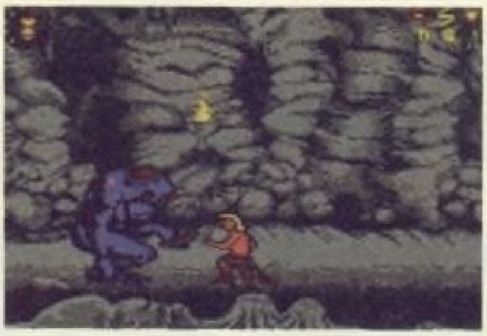
If you get off on wonderful graphics then this, like *Shadow of the Beast* is where to find 'em. However, what puzzles there are take a simple form and even the combat sequences are pretty basic. This aside, *Beast* fans will find this a natural progression, show offs will have fun wowing their friends with it, but sadly thinking gamesters could probably find better ways of spending such a big wad of dosh.

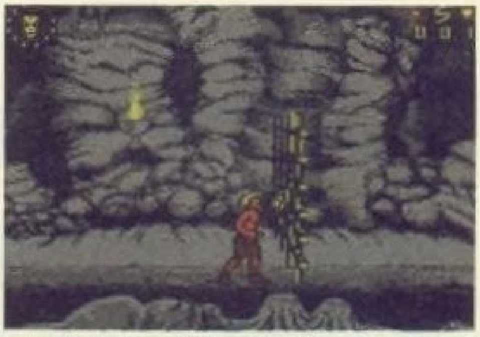
ANDY



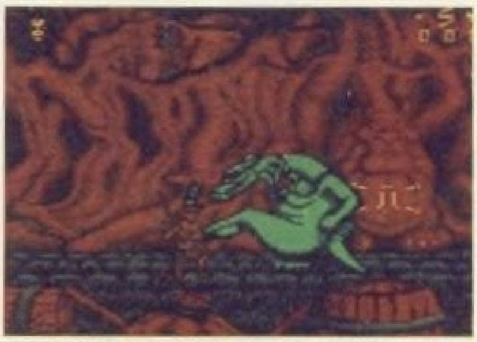
It takes a skilled warrior to reach this far. This is outside the demon's castle. The flying beast, while weedier than his master is still no push-over. Especially when helped by another stone thrower

Level three, you know, the really hard one. This is the geezer who holds the key. Which key? The one that opens the gate...





... well blow me. Here's that very gate. What we didn't show you though was the dozens of opponents you had to cleave through



All the beasts in this place seem to suffer from arthritis of the left leg. But that doesn't stop them kicking your barbaric butt

Game	*Wrath of the Demon*
Publisher	**Empire**
Cartridge	**£24.95**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Only two distinct types of gameplay, hardly any puzzles
- Collision is unforgiving

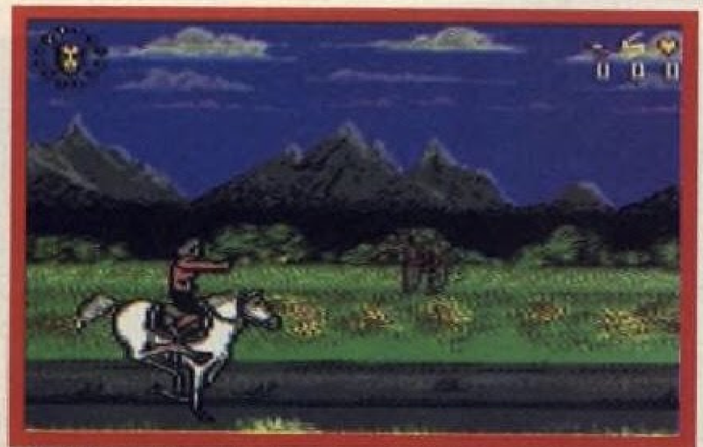
100

81%

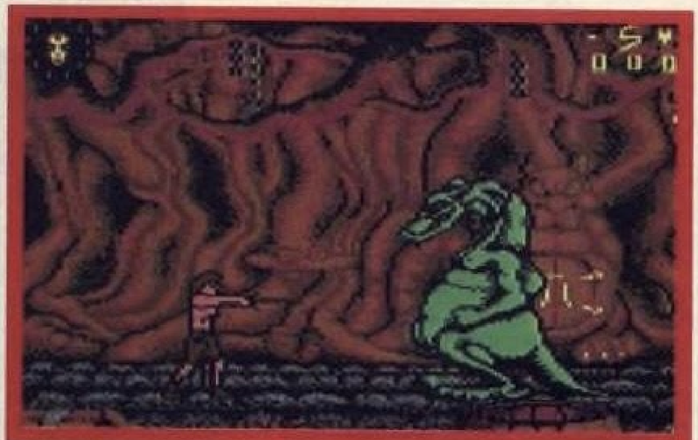
- **The stunning scrolling backdrops are some of the best you'll ever see**
- **Positively wizard animation (groan) on both the hero and the bad guys**
- **Huge sprites give the game the feel of a cartoon**
- **Loads of levels with different challenges in them**
- **Opportunity for exploration in the last level**
- **Good final encounter**
- **Excellent 'tween level screens to drool over**
- **Easy to remember joystick control options**

...AND THE UPPERS

0



● ZZAP!'s exclusive Megatape demo is level one and is very playable, comparing well to *Back To The Future III.*



● Oh no! It's a Satanic Film Planner providing a tough challenge with his nasty karate kicks. Sadly there's no flame breath.

ReadySoft are best known for the graphically stunning Amiga conversions of laser coin-ops Dragon's Lair and Space Ace. Now they promise to do the same for the C64, this time with an original title. After over a year in development, Wrath Of The Demon is finally ready and promises to set new standards for C64 graphics. Phil King wields his mighty sword in a quest to discover whether gameplay measures up.

WRATH OF THE DEMON

ReadySoft/Empire, £TBA disk, £TBA cartridge

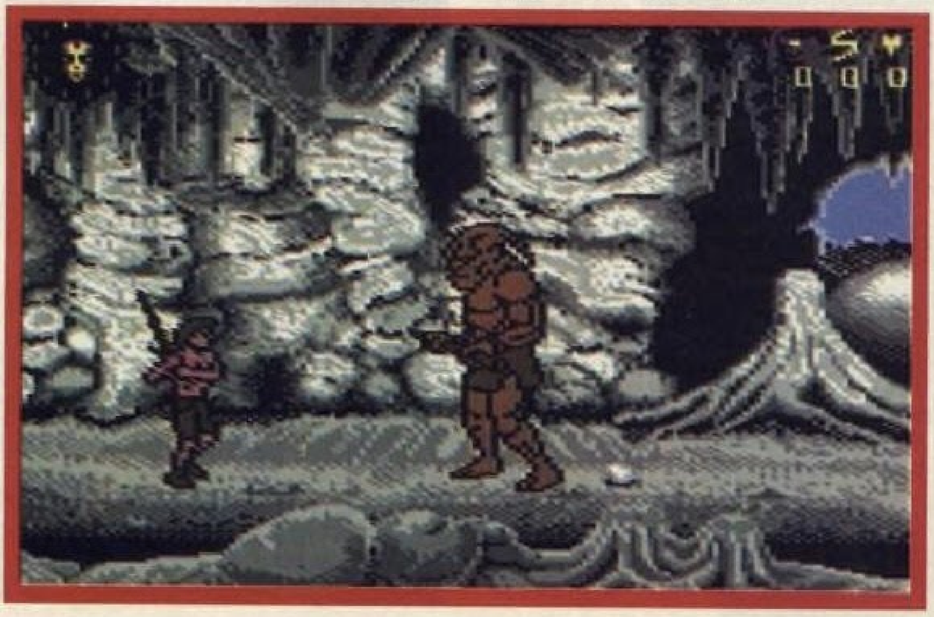
Once upon a time there was a brave, handsome warrior who was deeply in love with a princess. And they both lived happily ever after... Eh? Well they would have done if hadn't been for The Demon. Taking a fancy to the princess, he whipped her off to his castle.

What could the poor warrior do? Yep, he took a fancy to her lady-in-waiting and they lived happily ever after... What? Crikey, you don't like happy endings, do you? Okay, so the guy decided to rescue her (well, marrying a rich princess does have fringe benefits).

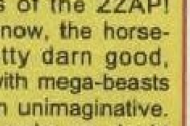
Guess what, yep, you play the part of the lovelorn warrior. So you get in your F-16 and prepare for an aerial assault on the castle. Well you would do if you had an F-16. Unfortunately all you've got is a sword, but it's a big one so you fancy your chances.

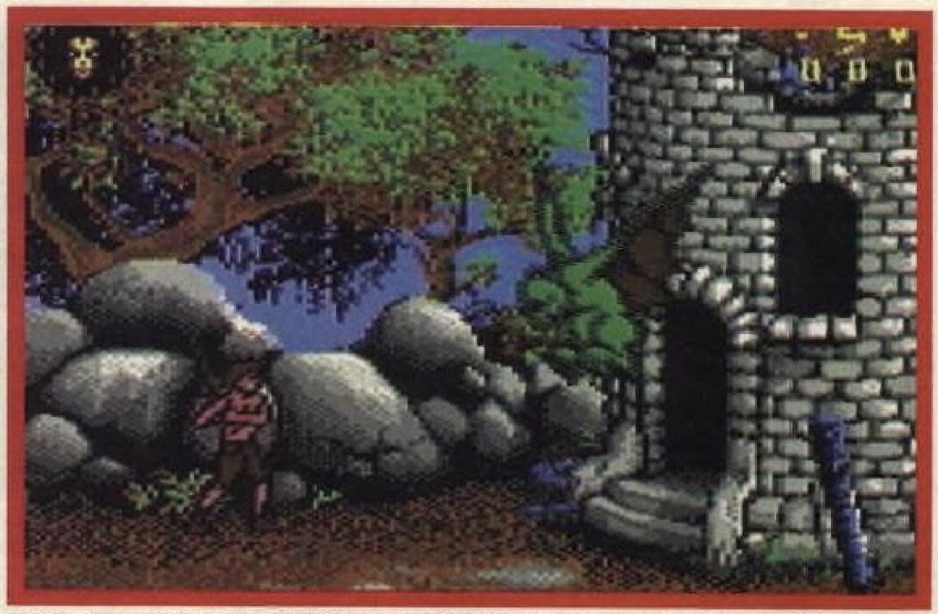
Mounting your favourite horse you ride through the first level: a horizontal scroller with some gorgeous ten-layer parallax

● Another mega-monster confrontation, this time quite a bit further into the game. Although the combat isn't amazingly original, it's good to look at and play.



Although *Wrath* never quite comes together as a great game, it's not a bad one and it really shines in places. The animation on the dragon, the troll which jumps five feet into the air with its feet waving about, the subtle shading on the cave backdrops, the vicious green bat-thing — the graphics are often quite superb. Gameplay doesn't sparkle quite so much. As players of the ZZAP! megatape demo will know, the horse-riding section is pretty darn good, unfortunately combat with mega-beasts like the dragon is often unimaginative. Infinite continue-plays make me doubt *Wrath*'s lastability, but it looks good, doesn't play half-bad and has a graphical ambition/imagination which makes it a really rather desirable package of Canadian coding.





● **This impressively animated flying lizard is all that stands between you and the entrance to the castle. You've come a long way but there's still plenty to do.**

scenery. Oncoming hazards include flying creatures which must be punched, plus rocks and crates etc on the ground to jump over. Colliding with hazards reduces your energy (shown by a dial at the top-left of the screen). Occasionally you'll see a potion on the ground: collected by precariously reaching down. Collected potions can be used on subsequent levels — there are three types: invincibility (only lasts for a few seconds), stun (temporarily paralyses enemies) and energy replenish (replenishes full quota of energy and is therefore best used when you're just about to run out).

Levels two and three are both single-screen beat-'em-ups. Level two sees you fighting a scythe-wielding goblin; he may be small but he's pretty vicious. An extra complication is caused by his mate who throws stones, avoided by jumping, ducking or performing a nifty forward roll along the ground. Combat moves (various sword swings) are accessed in usual beat-'em-up fashion, ie by pressing fire with different directions. Level three's opponent is a huge green dragon with a mean kick and headbutt but thankfully no flaming breath.

Level four is another horizontal scroller with a huge play area to explore on foot. With many doors to go through it's easy to get lost so mapping has to be definitely recommended. The hazards here include creepy crawlies (ants and worms) to jump over, flying demons to either punch or roll under and other men and beasts who run onto the screen. Foes come on from both directions — the ones from behind are particularly tricky. Thankfully, some creatures leave behind potions when killed.

'The first level is a horizontal scroller with some gorgeous ten-layer parallax scenery'

The next three levels involve more single-screen combat with a stick-carrying troll, a giant swamp monster and a flying beast aided by another stone thrower.

Finally you reach and enter the castle, similar to level four with more horizontally scrolling corridors filled with nasties. Find the right route and you'll eventually get to the final encounter with the fire-spitting Demon himself.

Wrath Of The Demon is graphically excellent throughout, from the amazing ten-layer parallax to the beautifully drawn backdrops to the huge, well animated mega-monsters. Sound is also very good with moody tunes adding to the tense atmosphere. What's not quite so consistent in quality is the gameplay. The horse-riding level is fun and a promising introduction, but the single-screen combat scenes play rather simplistically — you have only a few combat moves — and can easily be completed. Level four features a sudden step up in difficulty and is tough enough to be frustrating, although strangely at times quite dull: you can walk for miles without seeing a single enemy. Thankfully, when you die you automatically restart the current level, although ultimately this reduces the overall challenge — I don't think this one will take too long to complete.

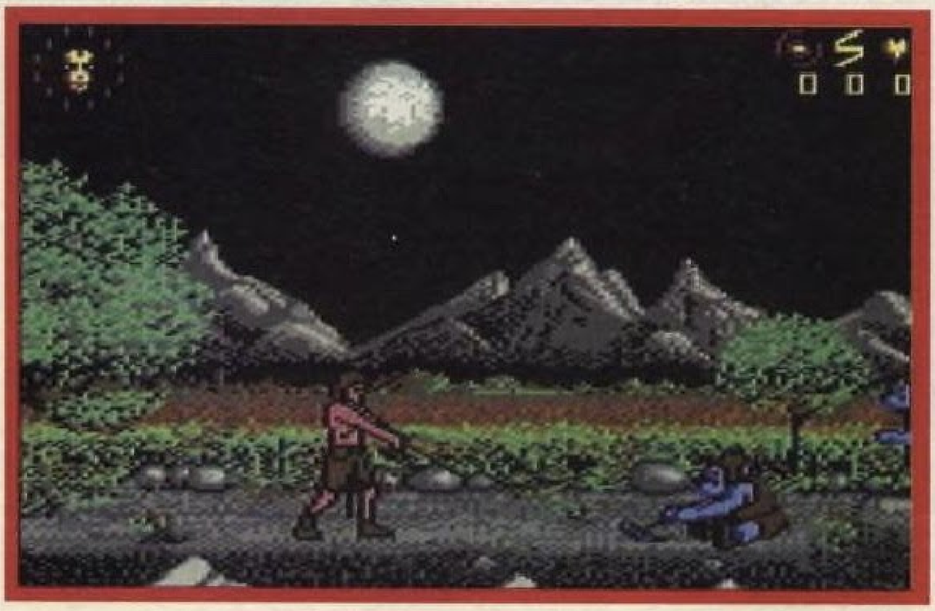
Don't get me wrong, unlike some previous ReadySoft titles *Wrath* is certainly NOT a case of 'nice graphics shame about the game', gameplay doesn't quite live up to the presentation but it's not too bad and *Wrath* is certainly a great game to show off to any C64 graphics-bashers!

CREDITS

Program and Additional Music Programming: Steve Douglas
Graphics Conversion: Jorge Freitas
Music: David Whittaker

Original concept by Abstrax.

● **Level two pits you against two hilarious goblins — these bad-tempered monsters are a little tricky to defeat though with one lobbing stones as the other swings his pick-axe.**



PRESENTATION 70%
Unlimited 'level restart' and some nice interlevel screens.

GRAPHICS 92%
The huge sprites look gorgeous and are superbly animated. Some beautiful backdrops including the amazing parallax-scrolling ones.

SOUND 74%
Nice atmospheric tunes, adequate spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Fun horse-riding level is a nice introduction, followed by playable one-on-one combat scenes.

LASTABILITY 72%
It's tough in places, but infinite continue-plays means you can usually get through to the next level. Mapping poses some challenge and mastering monsters takes practice.

OVERALL 76%

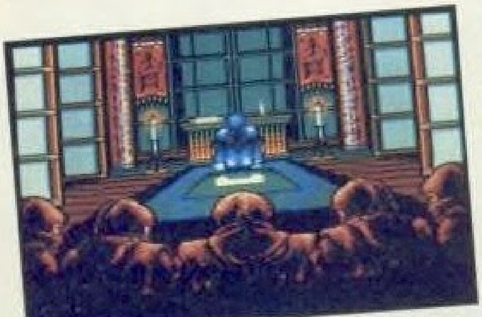
Looks great but lacks long-term challenge.

Yum Yum!
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

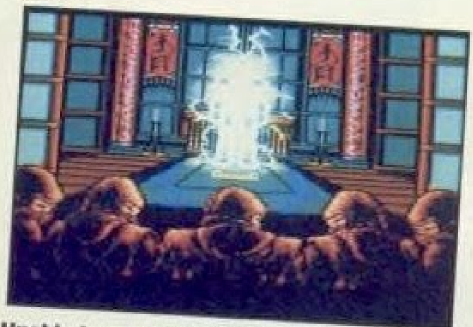
First came The Last Ninja. Then there was another one (obviously the first one wasn't the only last one). Now the first sequel has returned again – similar to the second last one but different from the first. Confused? Let our reviewer shed some light on the proceedings...

LAST NI

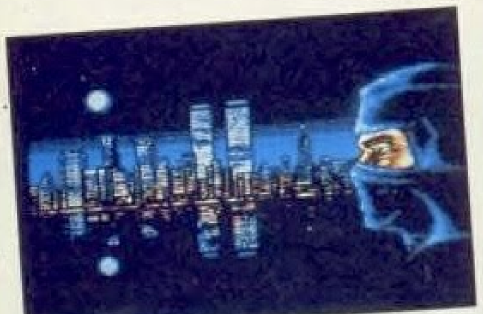
RE-MIX



Having defeated the evil Shogun Kunitoki, the Ninja warrior Armakuni has been busy reinstating a new Ninja order. One day, surrounded by his elite Inner Circle of disciples, a strange aura overtook the master.



Unable to move or fight against these strange forces, Armakuni was enshrouded by the light and was rendered unconscious.



On awakening, he saw towering mirrored buildings – his private war against Kunitoki has moved to a new battleground: New York, present day...

It's a Corker!

There's no real need for an introduction here, since *The Last Ninja* series of games are almost a legend in their own lifetimes, with huge sales and critical acclaim from magazines and gameplayers alike.

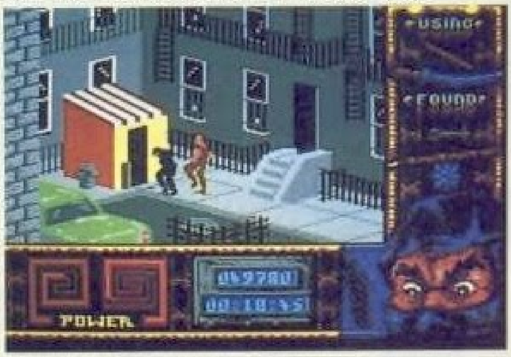
This is all well and good but, while *The Last Ninja* is currently available on budget, *The Last Ninja 2* has been discontinued and is no longer available. And all those people who bought their 64s in the last few months will know nothing of the legend of *The Last Ninja*. To solve this problemette, System 3 decided to re-launch *The Last Ninja 2*, but redesigned, repackaged and with a few extra bells and whistles. For everyone who has just bought a C64, been using a C64 in the outer Hebrides, or picked up this magazine by mistake, this is what the fuss is all about...

The game is similar to its predecessor, in that it takes place against an isometric 3D landscape. Flung into the urban jungle of the Big Apple the Ninja warrior, Armakuni, is intent on tracking down the Shogun Kunitoki, and despatching this evil warlord wizard once and for all (or until *The Last Ninja III*, at any rate).

The path to Kunitoki's lair leads Armakuni through a park, city streets, sewers, a warehouse, an office block and finally into the basement that Kunitoki call 'home'.

The scenic graphics are excellent. Produced in a similar fashion to those in *Time Machine*, each screen is redrawn every time it is entered. The split-second delay doesn't interrupt the action at all and this method allows the most complex

Other items are only found in places like bins and women's toilets



'OW! Hey watch where you're putting your knee, you dirty great antagonist, you!' Poor old Armakuni needs some rearguard action

GUTTER PRESS

MARK No – it's not really any different, but the original was excellent in itself. The gameplay 'feels' the same: the fact that I've got this far already says something. I prefer the old music, it's better. The face on the panel doesn't blink this time. I concentrate more on getting into the game, not the score. I've played *Last Ninja 2* a lot. I try to play it differently, by running around dudes instead of killing them, or finishing it more quickly. It's more of a challenge.

MATT The intro is good, it has excellent graphics. I like intros. It's more important to use the memory for gameplay but on cart or multiload they're OK. The score would be important if you were playing with friends but by yourself it doesn't matter. Yeah, it's a fabulous game. If you haven't got it, it's worth buying.

KEV It's a brilliant game – the graphics are very good. I'm looking forward to *The Last Ninja 3* – it's a big anti-climax when *Last Ninja 2* ends. I've always wanted it carry on. System 3 are very good because they concentrate on the C64.

GAZ If I saw this in a software shop I'd think the original was a demo, and this was the finished version. You wouldn't be jealous of anyone if they had the Re-Mix version to your original. Some people will think this is totally different – I think the message is be warned: if you've got *Last Ninja 2*, don't buy this.

A Ninja warrior trained in the art of 'not being duffed up a treat'

screens to be built up. Overall, the effect is simply stunning (well, it stunned me).

Armakuni's new world exists in 'true' 3D and so he has to be guided through doors, around objects and up ladders in order to fully explore his surroundings. And as you would expect, this isn't just a magical mystery tour: there are plenty of people who like nothing better than to take a large stick to our hero and beat seven shades of sushi out of him.

Of course, being a Ninja warrior trained in the art of 'not being duffed up a treat', Armakuni's having none of this. He has loads of combat moves at his command from kicking and punching through to shuriken-chucking, rice-flailing and stick-wielding.

NJA

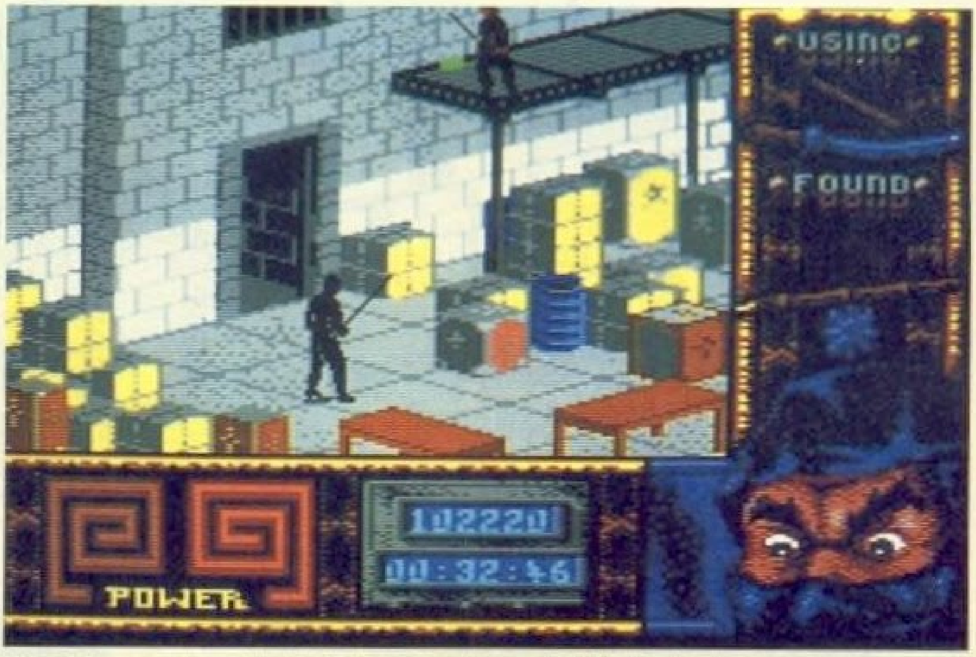
Indeed the huge range of joystick moves that need to be mastered can be a bit daunting at first but these are handled so well that guiding Armakuni soon becomes second nature (mind you, you'll need a 'stick with good diagonals).

Unfortunately, enemies are only rendered unconscious by Army's efforts: leave them alone long enough and they wake up for a second dose!

And so the mission continues ever onwards. Armakuni has to collect certain items that are needed on the next or later levels before making his way to the exit. Thankfully, once a level has loaded in total coming to a grisly end only sends you back to the start of that level, avoiding the usual multiload problems (er... cartridge owners needn't worry about this bit).

The gameplay is a pot-pourri of arcade action: exploring, puzzle solving and clue-finding, which is about as close to an interactive movie as you're likely to get on the C64. There's a large amount of lateral thinking called for, and a not small amount of experimentation! Certainly mapping isn't a bad idea since the viewpoint occasionally switches adding disorientation to the list of problems all clamouring for your attention.

At first the game can prove to be a bit tricky, since some collectible objects are indicated but other items are only found by hunting round in places like bins and women's toilets(!). And all this time, you face the unwelcome prospect of losing another of your precious lives!



One of the many (many!) detailed screens of *Ninja Re-Mix*. Having sneaked into the enemy warehouse, Armakuni has to pick his way though the mass of boxes and packages. Another Ninjutsu warrior lays in wait on the overhead walkway – he's Katana fodder, him...

Last Ninja Re-Mix is a great game, beautifully designed and superbly presented. My only reservation in recommending it is that the cartridge-only *Last Ninja III* is almost upon us. But then, why not hone your Ninjutsu skills with this one, ready for the forthcoming battle!

STEVE

New improved Ninja

***Ninja Re-Mix* features a new animated intro, a new status screen, different music for all six levels and slightly tweaked gameplay so it flows better. Some of the opponents are a tad easier to defeat and a few pick-ups are easier to... well... pick up. In answer to gamers' comments, the mission is now played against a time limit and there's a final score so you can see how well you've done and play against your earlier scores. So now you know.**

Game	Ninja Re-Mix
Maker	System 3
Cassette	£9.99
Disk	£14.99
Cartridge	£24.99

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- ■ A mite too tricky to start off with

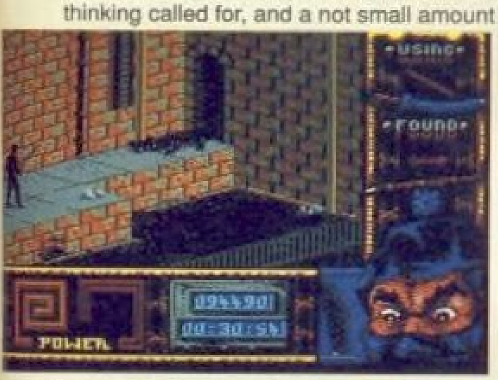
100

92%

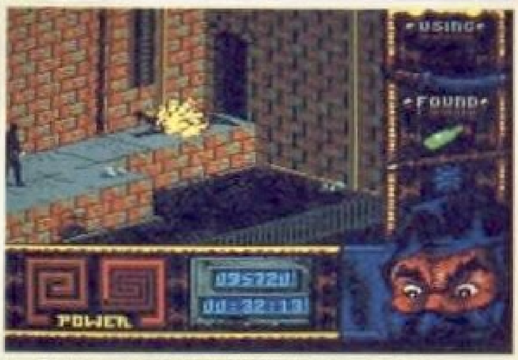
- ■ Superb graphics – beautifully drawn and incredibly detailed
- ■ Realistic animation of the characters
- ■ Puzzle/adventure/combat gameplay is extremely captivating and addictive
- ■ Nicely structured multiload makes life as pleasant as possible for tape owners
- ■ A host of smart soundtracks for that authentic 'Ninja in New York' ambience (well, sort of)
- ■ Instinctive joystick control makes light of the complex manoeuvres available
- ■ 95 varied screens make exploring as much fun as completing the mission!

0

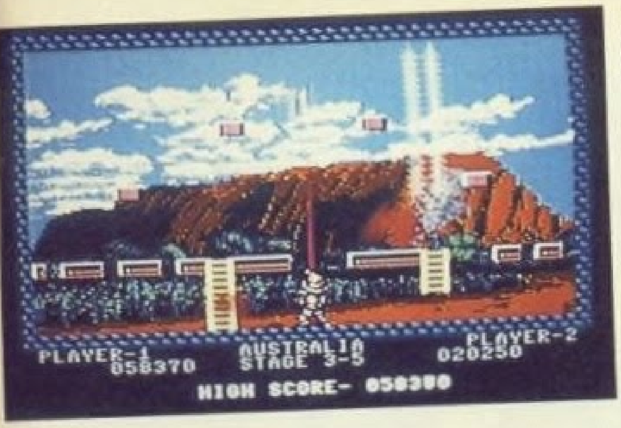
...AND THE UPPERS



'Oh Shhhhogun! There's a stonking great crocodile blocking my path. I don't think my little stick will make much of a dent in him... '



'... However, a Molatov Cocktail carefully lobbed in the right direction should result in a small pile of reptilian roasts. Job done!'



Australia's Ayres Rock provides a stunning backdrop to this particularly manic level. Oz is really like this?

Destroy these stampeding spheroids

PANG

Ocean must employ someone specifically to track down and acquire the rights to incredibly obscure coin-ops beginning with 'P'. After Taito's *Puzznic* (who?) and *Plotting* (eh!?) comes the Mitchell Corporation's *Pang* (never 'eard of it!). And whoever does it deserves a raise, since Ocean have come up trumps with all three titles. *Pang* is another on-cart-only job and a right little stonker it is too.

The plan of *Pang* is to make your way – either solo or with a pal – from Japan to the Easter Islands in the Pacific, travelling via the rest of the world. Your ticket to ride is earned upon completion of screens representing different locations around the globe. Each screen – complete with a very nicely drawn backdrop – is beset by bouncing bubbles. Blimey! Your task is to destroy these stampeding spheroids by spearing them with your harpoon device. This gizmo fires a vertical beam which hangs around for a second or two and bursts any bubble it touches. But instead of going 'pop' and disappearing, they merely split into two smaller bubbles which also need harpooning. And so on, until after about four hits, they finally wave bye-bye for good.

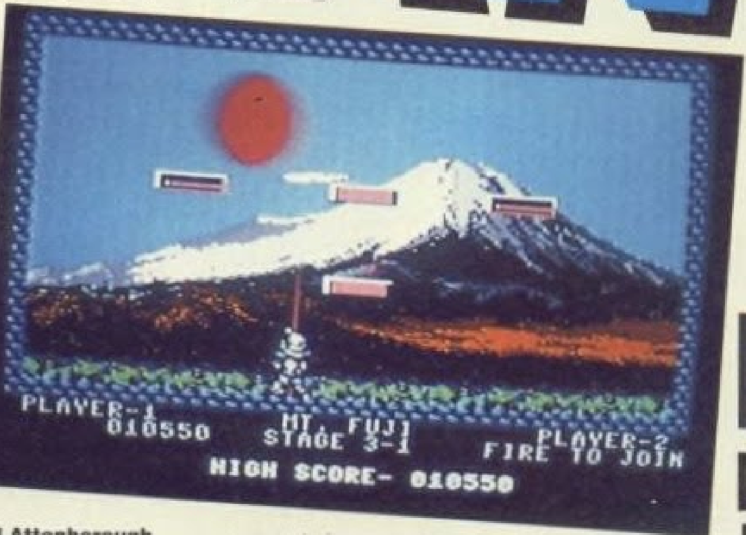
Your little character is guided to left and right across the bottom of the screen but has to climb over obstacles which start appearing on later levels. Sounds a doddle so far... But! The bubbles are deadly – even the teensiest touch and your little chap is sent flying and loses a life (what a wimpo). Not only this, but each screen is home to a series of creatures, like birds and small... er... things, which stroll across the screen in mid-game. The cheek! Shoot at these by all means cos if any of them touch your hero, it's time to start humming 'Another One Bites The Dust'.

Burst all the bubbles on the current screen within the given time limit (without losing all your lives) and you're sent to the next location, simple as that. As screens are cleared, a map appears showing your globe-trotting progress; survive to Easter Island and you've finished the game!

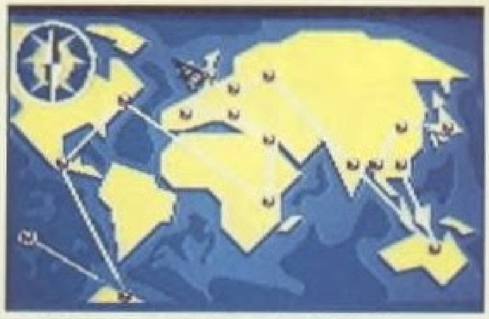
Pang comes as something of a pleasant surprise. The coin-op may not have made a big hit, but this deserves to be! Sound and pictures are well up to scratch with some sick-makingly jolly arcade tunes and those smart backgrounds. The bouncing motion of the bubbles is pretty convincing, and the only glitch comes with the bigger orbs which occasionally lose a sprite when things get busy.

It's very fast, very playable and very 'one-more-go-ish'. What more d'ya want? How about simultaneous two player action? Yep – got that too!

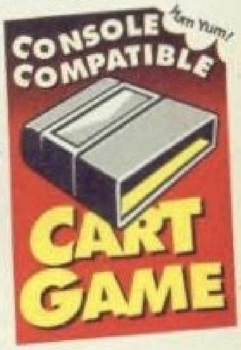
STEVE



More scenery of the David Attenborough variety. This time it's Mount Fuji in Japan. Colourful backdrops are only one reason to keep playing



As the game progresses, your journey around the world is charted in this map. Burst those bubbles if you want to travel



COLLECTIBLES

As if as your Mk IV Acme Bubble-Bursting Harpoon wasn't enough, useful items drop from the skies for no adequately explained reason, and can be collected to help your mission:

CLOCK – Freezes all bubbles on screen, so you can blast 'em to bits.
HOURGLASS – Gives you more time to clear the screen.
ANCHOR HARPOON – Attaches itself to the ceiling forming an impenetrable wall of harpooness. For a bit.
DOUBLE HARPOON – Fires a double stream of deadly harpoon heads, like a machine gun sort of thing.
SHIELD – Defence against a single bubble bump, but not against creatures.
VULCAN GUN – Kills Mr Spocks. Naaah, not really. It shoots loads of bullets, but can't damage the platforms.
DYNAMITE – Smart bomb – reduces all the bubbles to their smallest size. Not so smart if there are loads on screen!

Game	**Pang**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Repetitive nature of the gameplay is the only reason to down joysticks
- Possibly a little too easy to complete

100

88%

0

- **Frantic and hectic gameplay is simply very addictive!**
- **Smashing backdrop scenes of different worldly locations**
- **Simultaneous two-player action boosts playability**
- **Bouncing bubble movement has been beautifully captured**
- **Good choice of weapons and goodies staves off monotony**
- **Play is fast and the characters nice and controllable**
- **Bouncy renditions of coin-op tunes get the toes tapping**
- **Loads of levels so you're forever popping bubbles!**

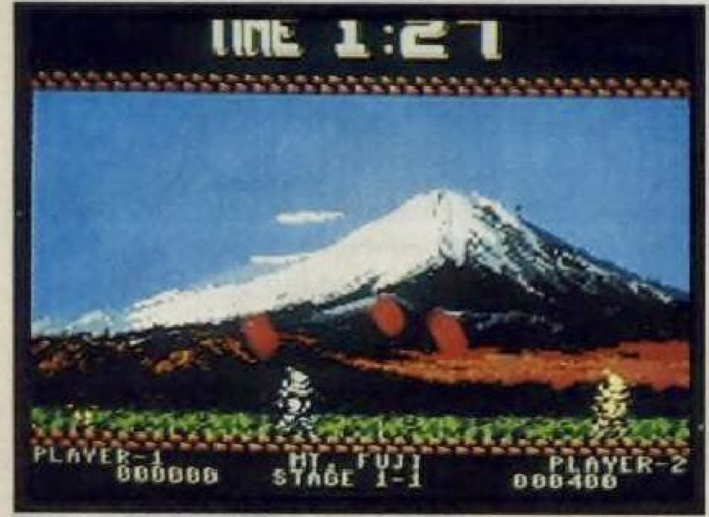
...AND THE UPPERS

PANG

Ocean, C64 £19.99 cartridge only

P*ang* is another of those obscure, surreal coin-ops that sensibly refuse to provide any kind of scenario. What can be said is that there's lots of balloons about. One or two cutesy Japanese characters aim to circle the world in their clapped out old biplane, stopping off at 17 countries to battle the mysterious balloons in four famous locations — each a static screen combining a spectacular backdrop with platforms and ladders.

The platforms can trap balloons — or players — and can sometimes be destroyed with your main weapon, a harpoon gun. To begin with, this can only fire one harpoon at a time — you have to wait before it hits something and disappears before you can fire again. This is tricky until you get used to it, especially as the balloons move quite quickly.



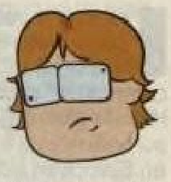
● **Pang really shines in the two-player mode where promises of co-operation soon evaporate in the heat of battle.**

The biggest balloons can be split three times before breaking down into the smallest balloons which are destroyed with a single shot. Some balloons drop bonus items when split: extra time, bonus points, a stopwatch to briefly immobilise the balloons, dynamite which instantly breaks all the balloons into the smallest ones, a rapid-firing pistol, double harpoons and a grappling hook. The latter sticks to platforms, holding the trailing rope into a rigid line for several seconds unless it's hit by a balloon — and until it does disappear you're out of ammo!

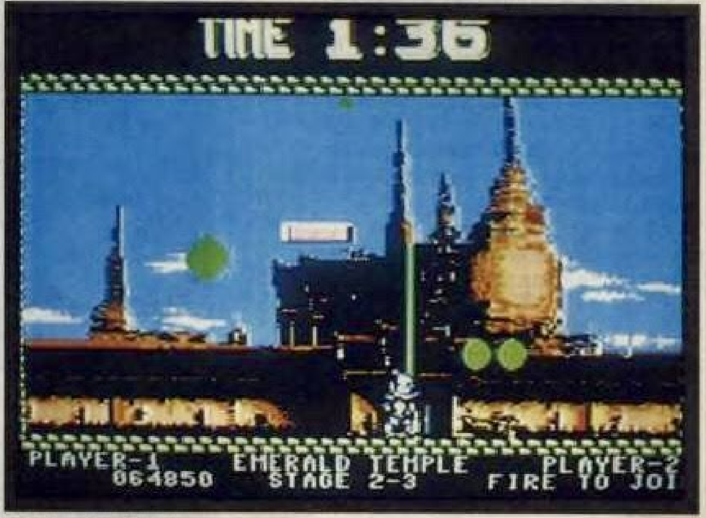
Players can also got into trouble by some nasty marauding creatures which briefly jam guns on contact. Other creatures are more helpful, crabs pop balloons with their claws. Once all the balloons are popped the players can go onto the next location, with a time bonus. If any player is hit, they not only lose a life but the screen resets with all the balloons going back to their start positions.

Way back in Issue 67 we gave this 82% on the Amiga, mainly because it didn't seem that sophisticated and Woz hated it. *Pang* certainly isn't overly complex — however, it's not quite as simple as it first looks. The various game elements, particularly the platforms and later creatures and slippery floors, mean each and every screen is something of a puzzle. Simply being fast and accurate with the old harpoon won't get you that far; most screens require a crude sort of method. Luck and instinct will get you through many, but a bit of tactical thinking saves lives — and hair-tearing! But where the game really takes off is in two-player mode. Every game starts off with promises of 'co-operation', but sooner or later your 'friend' will burst a balloon right over your head and war will break out.

The C64 game is a rather tough, and presentation is lacking for cart, but such a big challenge with lots of playability makes for a compelling game. If you're looking for something dramatically new, *Pang* is unlikely to really appeal, but if you're more interested in playability and lots of tricky levels then this could well keep you (and a friend) amused for ages.



● **A single player battles the new Red Menace outside the Kremlin. Watch out for the icy ground!**



Pang, technically is no great shakes, but it's incredibly playable and one of the best two-player games around. Completing a screen requires a lot of careful co-operation, good tactics and frantic balloon dodging. The difficulty level is harder than the Amiga, but this makes for better value on cart. In short, an incredibly playable game whic could easily drive you totally bananas!

PRESENTATION 68%

Simple, instructive demo, mediocre map screen and no interlevel screens. Simultaneous two-player mode is good though.

GRAPHICS 81%

Attractive, varied backdrops as you circle the world. Sprites are good but bubbles look a little false.

SOUND 71%

A reasonable tune with some nice variety, but could 've been more jolly.

HOOKABILITY 79%

A little tricky to begin with, you have to be precise with your shooting, but it soon becomes compulsive.

LASTABILITY 77%

17 countries with four locations each. Good high-scoring element, especially addictive for two-players.

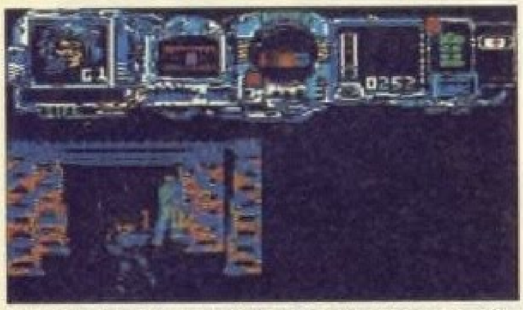
OVERALL 78%

Tough but enjoyable coin-op conversion.

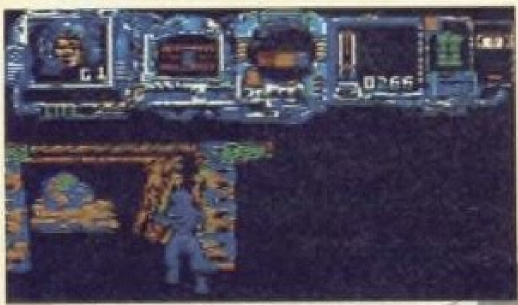
NARCO POLICE

Dinamic dish out a cartridge game with a difference. Join our reviewer as he takes on the role of squad leader in a 21st century drug bust but finds danger deep in a subterranean island

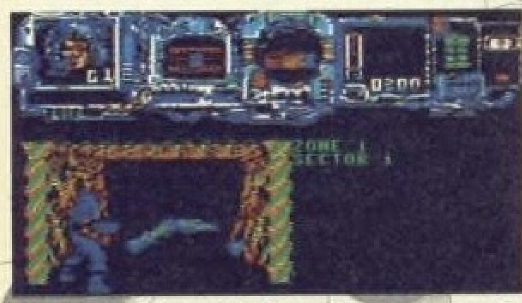
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME



A cheery shot to start off with. The first casualty of the game: group one's squad leader learns that kevlar jackets don't always work



At this junction a bunker is discovered. The green flash above the sandbags is the glare of enemy fire. Rocket launchers are needed here



Your acrobatic opponents are by no means easy targets. Next thing they'll do is hide behind the rocks and shoot at you

Ee, it's grim in the 21st century. Let me explain. *Narco Police* is set in a possible future when drugs manufacturers have great power at their disposal, so they can protect themselves while they continue to manufacture and distribute narcotics to populations across the globe. In fact, the idea in *Narco Police* is that you must lead a team of said Narco Cops in an assault on an island used by a drug manufacturing operation.

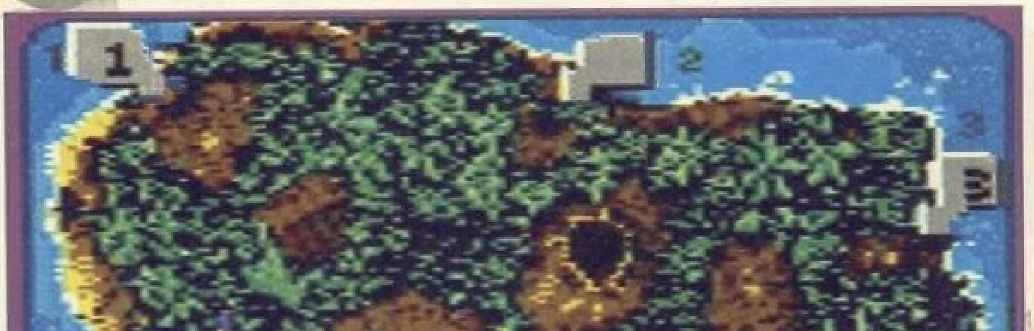
You equip three squads of five men each, deploy them at strategic points on the perimeter of the enemy's defenses and then guide the squad leaders through the network of defenses, into the core of the drug factory. Finally, all you have to do is plant some factory-crippling explosives and you can kiss the place goodbye.

At the start of the game you have three options. You can go straight in and play, in which case the computer will use default setting for your troops' starting positions and weapons, or you can re-select weapons and re-select starting positions. When you check out the weapons screen, a full range of combat kit is laid out before you, from flak jackets to personal teleport systems and fragmentation rockets. It's worth experimenting with as many devices as possible in your first couple of games and making sure that you know how to use them. Also, at least one squad should carry a transporter pack and activate it soon into the mission. You have back up troops but cannot summon them unless a squad has a transporter.

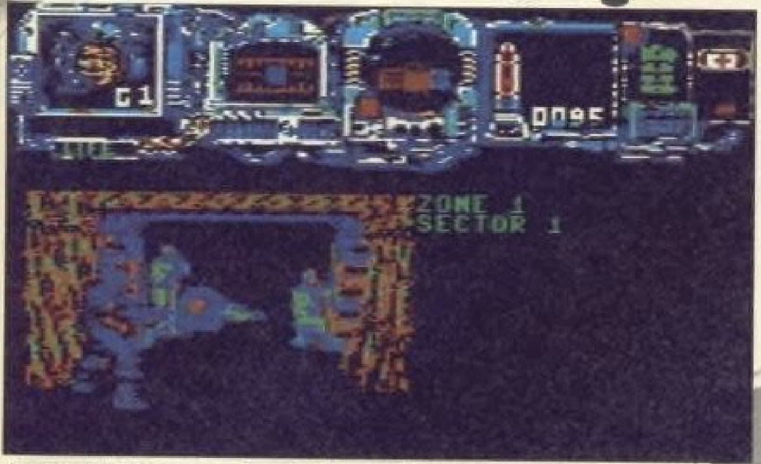
The deployment screen shows the whole of the factory island. The idea is that the druggies' base is an underground network of tunnels, much as you'd find in a mine. There are five points from which this network can be entered and you must choose three of them.

Once your happy with the kit and deployment orders issued to each of your squads, it's time to start the game proper. Your view is that of someone standing directly behind the leader of the squad currently selected. You control the squad leader with the joystick, moving him left or right or pushing him deeper into the tunnel. A display at the top of the screen tells you which squad is currently selected, indicates your direction on a compass and displays other useful data such as ammo counts, kit being used and damage.

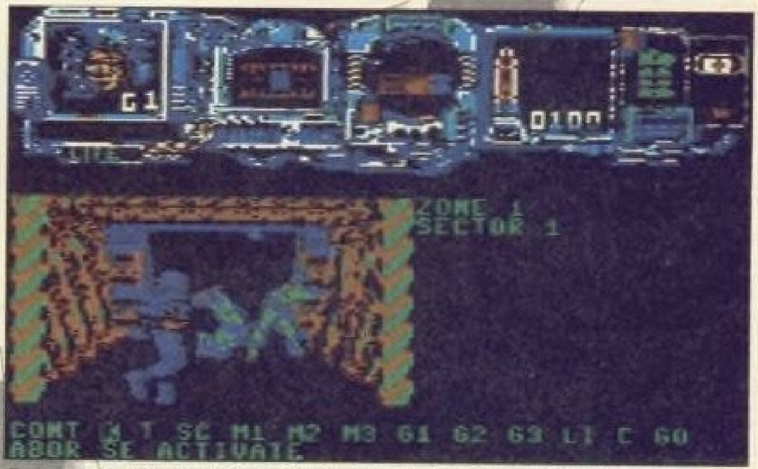
As you make your way through a tunnel, guards jump down from rafters or appear from niches in the rock walls and open fire. Because of your viewing angle, it's a little difficult to see where your leader's gun is aimed but a tunnel-wide spread of bullets or the launch of a fragmentation rocket (if you're heavily outnumbered) should have the foe falling to the ground in no time.



This screen allows you to direct your three squads into any of the five tunnel entrances but only one squad can attack a particular tunnel. It's worth mapping the tunnel layouts if you want to get anywhere. Some of them double back or overlap



A squad leader comes face to face with some guards during a tunnel search. This time two of the guards make it to cover but the third takes a bullet. It evens the odds a little...



One guard rolls and the other throws a grenade. The action freezes as the green menu bar appears, allowing the trooper to launch a missile. Check out how accurate that animation is

Occasionally, you come up against armoured doors. These can be penetrated by missile fire. If you come up to a junction, sliding the character left or right allows him to take a different exit. If your squad leader becomes a casualty, he's automatically replaced by the next member of the squad. A squad is lost for good when its last trooper dies.

You can switch control between the groups at any time. You can also call for an update on how your whole team is doing. However, the enemy base is split up into sectors and zones and you should try to synchronise the progress of your three squads so that they all proceed into a new section at the same time. If you let one group get too far ahead, the other two will never be able to catch up with it.

Plant some factory-crippling explosives and kiss the place goodbye

The tunnels are also fitted with automatic defense systems and cameras. If one of your squad leaders comes across a computer terminal (and several of these are dotted around the complex) he can access the controls of these cameras and systems and switch them off. It's an added bonus to the game which should appeal to cyberpunk fans.

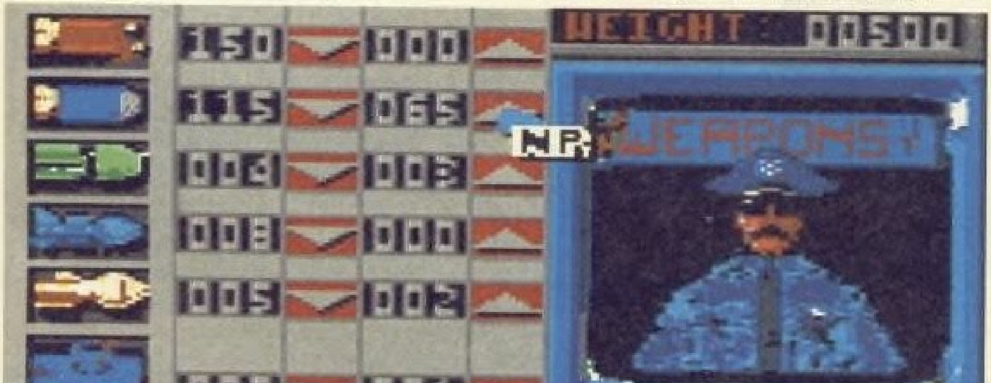
That's about it. How does it play? Hmm, hard. It plays hard but well. For a start, you won't find a game that looks anything like *Narco Police* (big plus). The way squad leaders shuffle along the tunnel walls makes the action tense and convincing and the size of the sprites alone is impressive. Your opponents roll across the floor to dodge your fire, find cover when possible and generally behave as though they're intelligent (another big plus). But it does have its problems.

The graphics are so complex that the joystick is slow to respond. Fortunately, it doesn't feel as though you've been cheated if you bite a bullet while you were trying to find cover, but if only it could have been a bit faster... Another problem I've already latched on to is that of aiming your weapon. Some kind of floating crosshair would have helped. My other complaint is that functions like firing missiles or changing squads are selected from a fiddly menu freezes the action.

Nevertheless *Narco Police* is a very different kind of game and it's more-ish, despite the fact that you keep getting blasted off the screen at first. The graphics are unusual but terrific and moody sound effects accompany tunnel exploration. Machine gun and rocket fire sounds are suitably chunky too. I'd say that the *Narco Police* should expect a few more recruits when it hits the streets.

SEAN

Game	**Narco Police**
Publisher	**Dinamic**
Cartridge	**£9.95**
Cassette	**£14.95**
Disk	**£19.95**



Your weapons payload is predecided but you can alter it from this screen. On offer are two types of ammo, three rockets, explosives, a first aid kit, a transporter and armour

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Some loss of clarity due to sprite size makes aiming difficult
- A bit on the slow side, again due to the massive sprites
- Single game type throughout

100

78%

0

- **An original game idea well programmed**
- **Colourful graphics**
- **Clever animation on troopers and bad guys. See 'em roll, dive and fall**
- **Tension building sound effects and armour piercing machine gun sounds**
- **Optional mission set-ups guarantee lasting appeal**
- **Challenging game play**
- **Features like logging on to the terminals add depth**

...AND THE UPPERS

CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

You just can't keep a good bad guy down, er... Try that again. Twice have the skills of System 3's greatest warrior hero defeated evil shogun Kunitoki. Now, Kunitoki and Armakuni meet for the final showdown in a vast 512K cartridge game

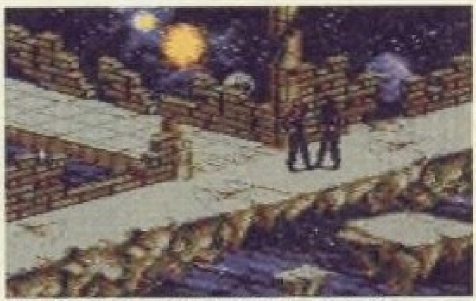
It's a Corker

LAST N

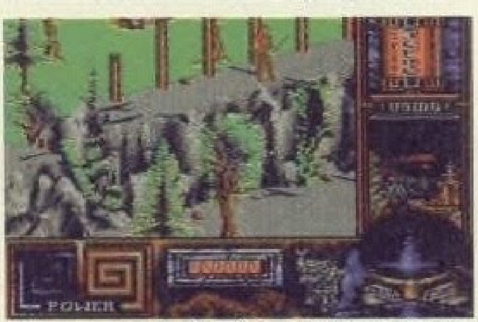
The battle between the evil Shogun, Kunitoki, and the last Ninja, Armakuni, has been waged across time and space. Twice Kunitoki has been defeated and twice he has cheated death: his spirit form was only despatched – now he lives again...

Armakuni faces his greatest challenge. Kunitoki has returned to medieval times and invaded the Tibetan temple of Shao Lin – mystic source of the Ninjas' magic. Kunitoki's evil influence is corrupting the pure magical force of the temple. As his influence spreads, so Armakuni's Ninjutsu energy is being eroded. If Kunitoki is not defeated once and for all, the order of the Ninja will disappear forever (ooh crikey!).

The game opens with a superb three minute intro sequence, which shows Armakuni making his way across the desert towards the temple. It's interspersed with the production credits, movie style. The whole intro is a whopping great 64K long – as much as a whole game – and really sets the tone for what's to come.



The 'Void' chamber is the final barrier before Kunitoki. It's also filled with Ninja masters so don't be in a hurry to get there!



The new prayer wheel (top right) shows any useful items in the vicinty and also briefly displays the enemy's chosen weapon

Anyone who has played *The Last Ninja*, *Last Ninja 2* or *Ninja Re-mix* will be familiar with the style of gameplay. Armakuni is guided through a flick-screen 3D world viewed from slightly above. Each scene takes a second or two to draw, due mainly to the incredibly detailed graphics – easily among the best C64 game graphics ever seen. By the way, as well as the *Ninja* games, this 'graphic engine' (the program that draws the most complicated things it can as simply and quickly as it can) was also used in *Time Machine* (see Gamebusters, this ish).

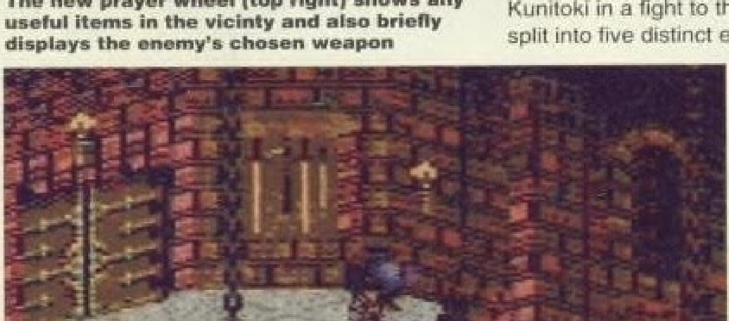
Having sneaked into the temple, our Ninja hero must battle and puzzle his way through five elemental chambers in order to face Kunitoki in a fight to the death. The temple is split into five distinct elemental areas: Earth, Wind, Water, Fire and Void (yes, we now know Void isn't an element, but apparently the Japanese reckoned it was, so there).

Each chamber has puzzles which are typical of that element. For instance, in the Fire chamber, there's a complex puzzle which involves molten metal and a lost key. Likewise, in the Water chamber you have to use your amazing Ninja powers of deduction to stop a waterfall from flowing.

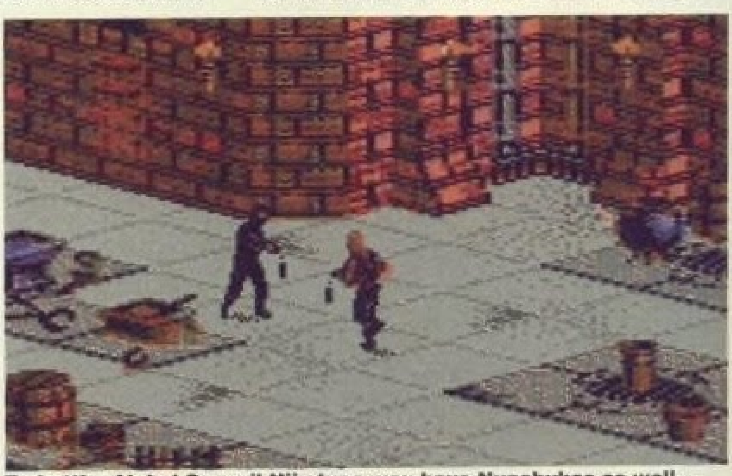
The puzzles are slightly more complex than before, but still follow the same method of searching for specific items which are then used on later screens. Oh, and in case you already know what I mean, it's now a lot easier to pick objects up. Also, *Last Ninja 3* employs a prayer wheel, a device which opens on the screen to reveal any collectibles in your immediate vicinity – a distinct improvement over previous *Ninjas*, where useful items were highlighted briefly when you entered a new screen.

While all this collecting and puzzling is going on, Kunitoki's henchmen are doing their best to relieve you

Five levels, 17 sceens 16 different bad guys and takes up 512K

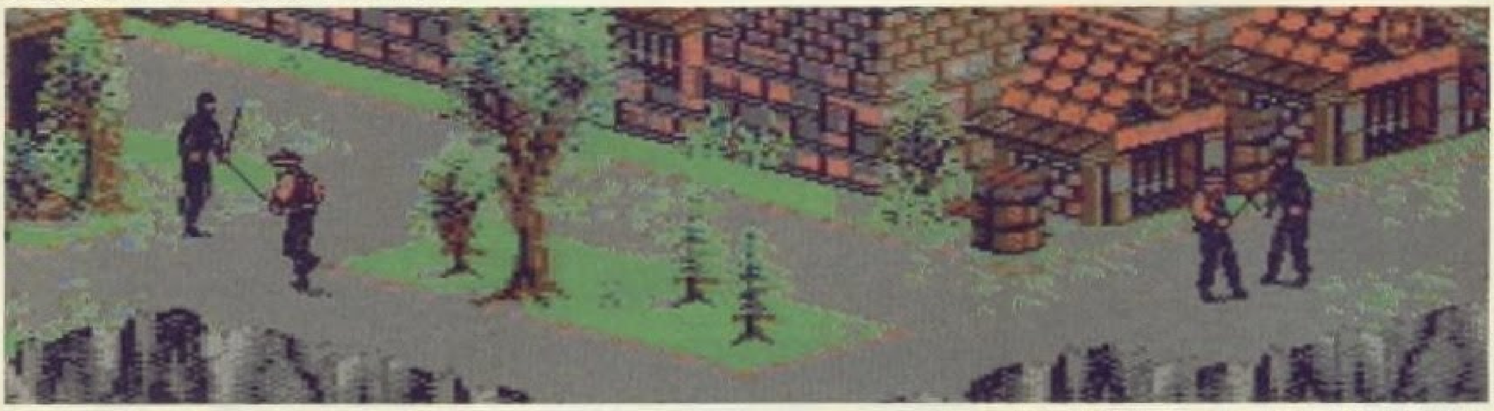


Bare feet versus a sword. This sort of combat is a good way to raise your Bushido points, and a bad way to avoid getting severely beaten



To battle. Ah-ha! So, evil Nija-type, you have Nunchukas as well... (Erm... where did I put my rather large Ninja sword of doom?)

With two screens bolted together you can start to imagine just how big the Temple is. And remember – there are 71 of these little devils secreted inside that little cartridge...



NJA III

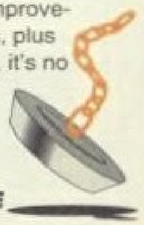
of a limb or two. Baddies lounging in the opening chambers don't prove too much of a problem but later levels rely less on puzzles and more on butt-kicking. By the time you manage to reach the Void chamber, the puzzle element is replaced completely by a 'getting the crap beaten out of you' element. So be warned. Here, you have to make your way round walkways suspended maze-like in space. While you're doing all this, prepare to be viciously assailed by vicious assailants. All the baddies on this level are masters of Ninjutsu and can take a fair amount of damage as well as deal it out.

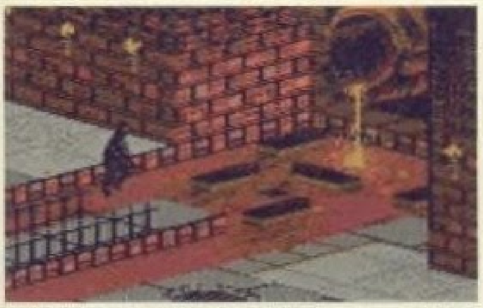
Having solved your puzzles and defeated the foe, it only remains for you to collect the hidden scroll which allows entrance to the next level – once you've defeated the chamber guardian. Er... sorry about that. Forgot to mention that there's a fairly evil guardian to kill before entering the next chamber.

Last Ninja 3 is a game of epic proportions. There is almost nothing to fault it on – the presentation is superb, with stunning intro and outro sequences, smart high-score lists, grisly game over screens and some great soundtracks. The gameplay's blend of exploration, puzzles and combat will daze you. And the attention to detail is amazing, from the immaculate 3D to the animated scenery to the comfy control method.

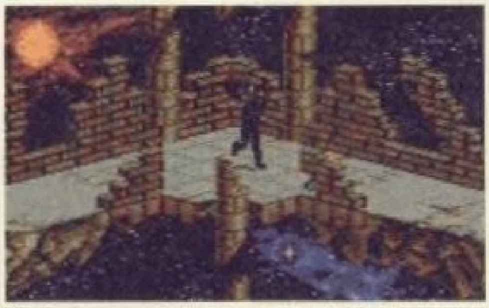
The *Last Ninja* series has made thousands of fans so most people would buy this even if it was simply more of the same. However, with the tweaks and improvements in gameplay and graphics, plus the advantage of instant loading, it's no exaggeration to say that *Last Ninja 3* marks a new high for C64 gaming. Treat yourself to something very special indeed.

STEVE





In the Fire chamber, Armakuni somersaults his way across a pit of molten lava. Otherwise he's more singe-a than Ninja



Having entered the maze-like Void chamber, Army now has to utilise his powerful Ninjutsu skills of 'Not Getting Lost'

Bushido Dragon

The brown dragon on the status panel is the Bushido meter, and signifies increasing training and honour in the Ninja's martial art.

Sounds a bit noncey, but it works like this: if you attack with bare fists when your opposition is armed nunchukas, then your Bushido points are increased because you don't fear the fight. But if you use the same moves over and over again to defeat an enemy, your Bushido points are decreased because you lack style. By the time you face Kunitoki, only those with a high Bushido level stand any chance of defeating him.

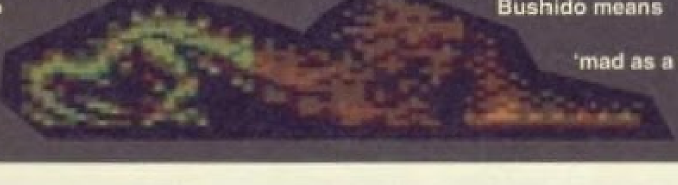
Consider the words of the 18th century Hagakure Bushido of Yamamato Tsunetomo:

Bushido, I have found, lies in dying. When confronted with two alternatives, life and death, one is to choose death without hesitation...

A man of great valour does not think of the fight;
he fervently plunges right into the jaws of death...

Bushido means to struggle desperately in the jaws of death... even dozens of men find it difficult to kill only one samurai in this frantic state.

So there you go. Bushido means 'mad as a shovel.'



Game	**Last Ninja III**
Publisher	**System 3**
Cartridge	**£24.95**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Only really lacking in originality

100

97%

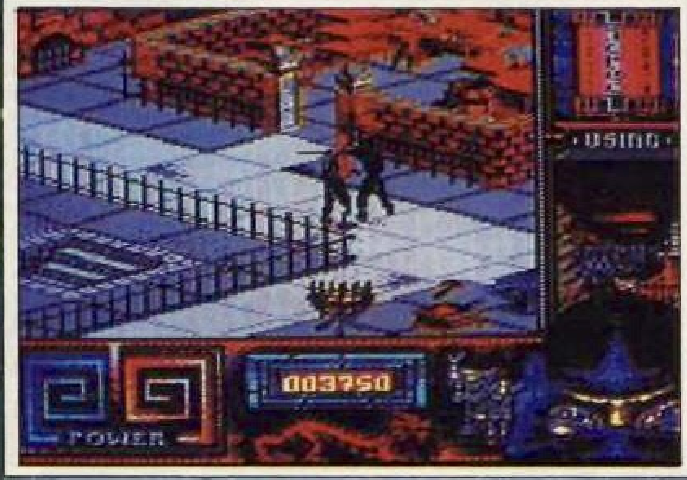
0

- **Tremendous amount of variety in visuals, sound, and the all-important gameplay**
- **Animation on the different sprites is simply superb**
- **Complex control method is handled very well**
- **Wonderful touches throughout, like background animation**
- **Utterly convincing 3D scenes**
- **Five huge levels – no finishing this one overnight**
- **Terrific mix of puzzle-solving combat and adventure – more interactive movie than game**
- **Beautiful presentation throughout. And what an intro!**
- **Thought provoking problems add extra depth to the game**

• System 3, C64
£24.95
cartridge only

NINJA III

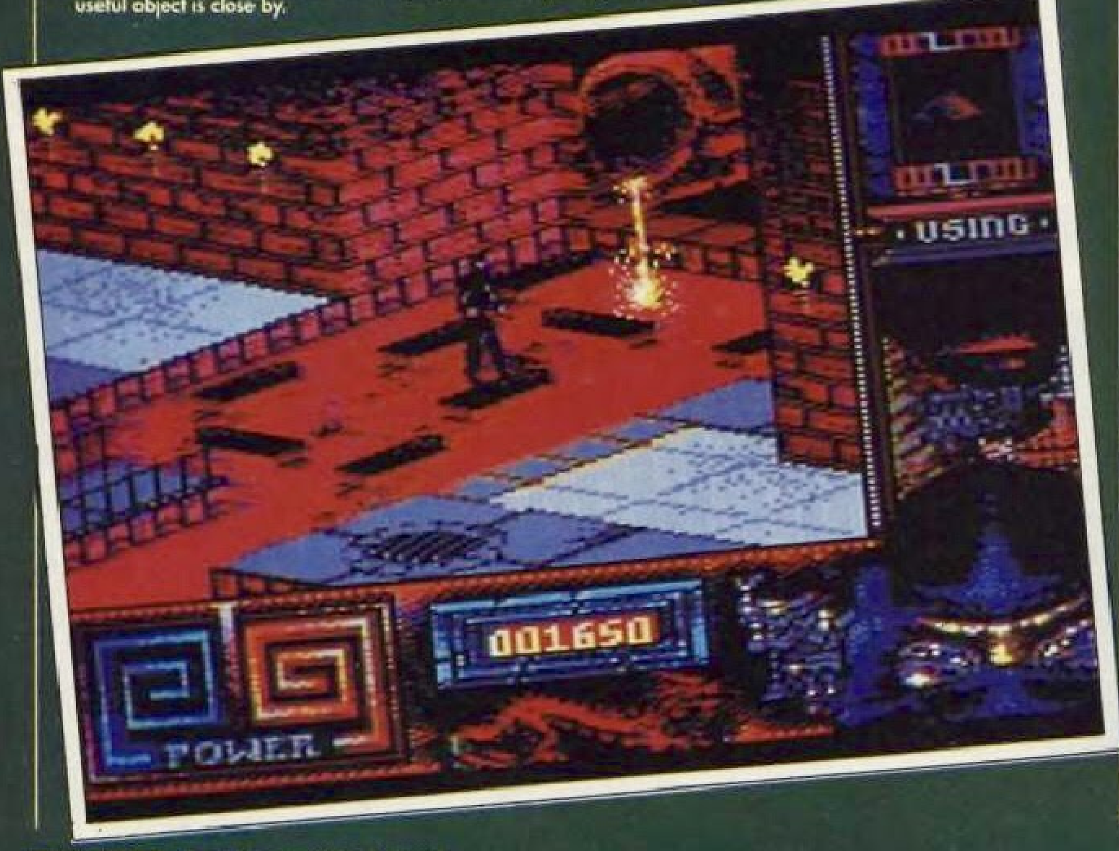
★ Taking on a baddie on the beautifully detailed fire level.



It's been several centuries, and four years, since the ancient ninja brotherhood was all but wiped out by the evil machinations of the Shogun Kunitoki. In the aftermath of that slaughter the last ninja, Armakuni, defended the island Len Fen against the Shogun's armies (94%, Issue 28, 1987). Kunitoki was defeated and only escaped death by means of a magical orb transporting him through time and space to contemporary New York. *The Last Ninja II* (94%, Issue 41, 1988) saw Armakuni tracking Kunitoki through the streets of New York, taking on his vicious criminal empire and ultimately defeating him once more. But now Kunitoki is ready for Armakuni. In this latest epic the malevolent Shogun has retreated to Tibet and the Palace of Mysteries where he plots a new world order, a realm of Chaos. While he works at this colossal and apocalyptic feat of Black Magic his latest, and most powerful army has prepared itself for the last ninja...

The Palace of Mysteries is split into five levels: earth, wind, water, fire and void — each with between 12 and 16 screens. To complete a level, its guardian shogun must be killed. This requires a certain amount of Bushido, or honour, which is built up by defeating

★ Crossing a lethal lava river. Note the prayer wheel opening to show a useful object is close by.

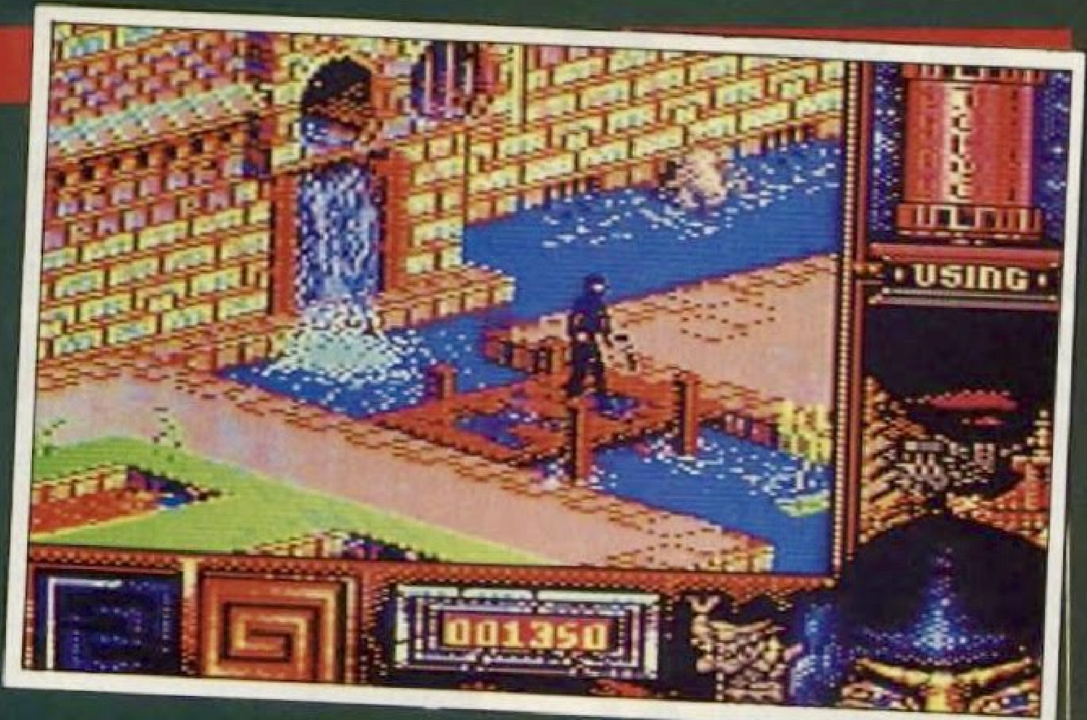


System 3's flagship series has gone back to its roots with this brilliantly atmospheric arcade adventure. The three-minute intro is a stunning example of what's possible on cartridge which, combined with superb death and 'game complete' pictures, gives the program a genuinely magical feel. The graphics are generally excellent, with some superb backgrounds. The detail on trees is stunning, for example, and the way they overwrite characters illustrates the slickness of the isometric programming. What can't be seen from screenshots is the animation, with the main sprite moving really well — just watch how nunchukas sway when being carried. System 3 have created one of the most detailed and atmospheric playing environments seen on the C64, and my only reservation is that realism has made some of the levels a bit samey. Only on level five does the game go for a dramatically different, surreal mysticism.

Actual gameplay is very strong with some nice puzzles to sort out. Manufacturing vital objects leads to some complex problems. In truth I wish there could've been a lot more of this — it's not a *Time Machine* in terms of complexity or originality. However there's plenty of ninja combat, with a lot of varied opponents, including a shogun at the end of each level. The need to build up Bushido by using the correct weapons is a neat idea (although you can cheat by concentrating on beating up level one baddies). In terms of gameplay structure *III* isn't a massive improvement over *II*, but for existing *Ninja* fans and anyone else who simply wants a good arcade adventure, *III* is likely to be an essential purchase.

Kunitoki's men. There's a different type of soldier for each level, each with their own attack style and weapon. To achieve the most Bushido from a battle you should use the same weapon as the soldier uses. If you use a more powerful weapon you win little honour. However, Kunitoki's power means that unlike you, soldiers cannot be killed; only rendered unconscious for a while. Your energy is shown in the bottom-left corner, along your opponent's. Care must be taken because energy cannot be restored, although there are extra lives to be picked up. You begin with five lives and three continue-plays.

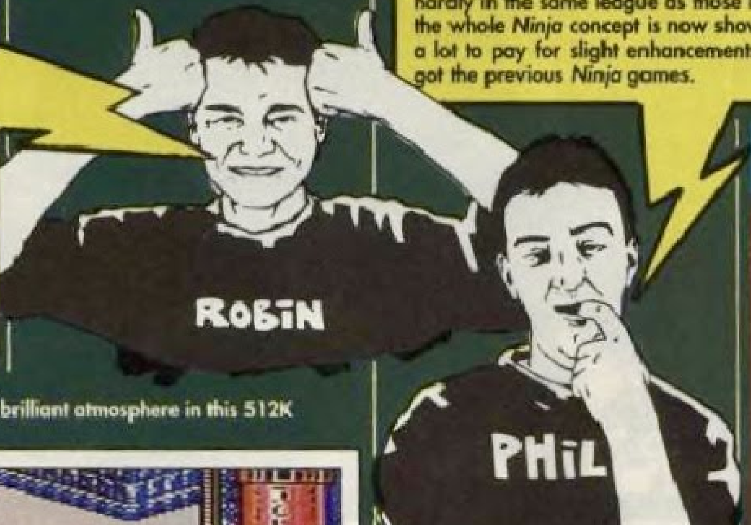
There's more to the game than simply combat, though: besides a variety of weapons such as swords and nunchukas, there are numerous objects vital to solving various puzzles. At the top-right of the control panel a prayerwheel opens to display any objects hidden on the screen. It would spoil things to reveal too many of the clues, but one simple example shows the basic idea. To climb a steep cliff face you need to find a pair of gloves and some nails — once collected these are automatically turned into climbing gloves. Later puzzles are quite a bit more complex: one even requires you use a furnace to manufacture an item.



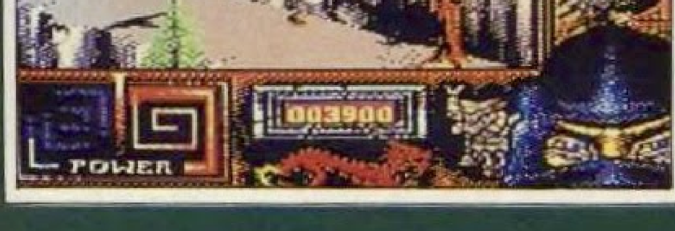
★ That superbly animated waterfall deserves investigation...

With a remarkable boost to the graphics over the first two *Ninja* games, *III* certainly looks great. Veterans of the original will notice similarities with the first game but the oriental look is atmospheric, the elemental theme a good one and the attention to detail considerable. Although there's not a lot new in the gameplay, the great idea of taking on the enemy with *their* weapon instead of your most powerful one is a new idea that works well. This gives the enemy intelligence, makes you stop and think about each conflict, adding depth to the game — although I don't think this alone justifies the higher price. The instant loading is great though, even if previous *Ninja* games were well-structured so multiloading wasn't too bad, and the uniquely ambitious intro would've been unworkable on tape or disk. There's some nice touches about *Ninja III* and a definite appeal with some strong puzzles. For me the New York theme of *II* made it the best of the series, but *III* is a classy product in its own right and bound to a massive success.

The *Last Ninja*'s gameplay isn't anything special, but the concept has been executed extremely well. It isn't as interactive as I would have liked, and when it boils down to it there isn't really much to it. Sounds familiar? Well it should because that's what Gary Penn said about the original, way back in 1987. Four years on and nothing much has changed. The execution is still impressive with some superbly detailed isometric graphics, but gameplay-wise *III* isn't much of an improvement on its predecessors. The graphics are possibly the finest yet and instant loading is fun, but it's a pity the cart wasn't used to get rid of the mildly irritating build-up of graphics when you enter a screen. I also expected some far more sophisticated puzzles — yes, they have been marginally improved, but are hardly in the same league as those in the old Ultimate games. I think the whole *Ninja* concept is now showing its age a bit, and 25 quid is a lot to pay for slight enhancements — especially if you've already got the previous *Ninja* games.



★ Stunning backdrops help create a brilliant atmosphere in this 512K masterpiece.



AMIGA UPDATE
See previews!

PRESENTATION 94%
Three-minute intro, death pic and good end sequence. Three continue-plays.

GRAPHICS 94%
System 3's unique isometric 3-D is taken a step further — beautifully detailed and evocative. The only slight flaw is that there isn't any dramatic variety apart from level five.

SOUND 92%
Excellent main title tune, various tunes for different levels and standard FX.

HOOKABILITY 92%
Fairly easy to get into, the control system has been improved and the first few baddies are fairly easy to defeat.

LASTABILITY 94%
Five levels provide a substantial challenge, especially with need to build up Bushido.

OVERALL 93%

Another classic System 3 arcade-adventure.

CHASE HQ II

Yum Yum!
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

Racing along the fast lane from Manchester is Ocean's first cartridge release. It's just skidded into the car park, in fact. But just how long do you think it will take before you drive it into the ground?

The Mayor's daughter has been kidnapped and was last seen heading north in a red Porsche. What do you mean you're all busy, is anyone free? Oh no, not those two. Aren't they the ones who gratuitously shoot up innocents and criminals alike? Oh Gawd, I suppose they'll have to do...

And that's where you come in. You take the role of a couple of tough streetwise cops, whose role it is to save three unfortunate kidnap victims, one of whom is the Mayor's daughter. To achieve this glorious aim you are equipped with a large red car which has been specially designed with only two gears (programmers' cop-out alert) and unlikely speed capabilities. Oh yes, and you have a handgun.

That said, it's time to hit the road, Jack. Push forward on your shaft of glee *(I think he means joystick – Ed)*, and your car will accelerate like there's no tomorrow. Once you're up to top speed all that remains is to stay on the road. This is all very well on the straights but bends prove a little more tricky. In these cases, careful use of the brake (pulling your joystick back) is advisable. Mastering this skill is ludicrously difficult as the car seems to have little or no steering capacity when cornering. What's more, it would appear that the kidnappers have chosen to commit their dastardly deeds during the rush hour, as the volume of traffic is startling. This can prove hairy on bends but on the straights, great fun can be had bumping innocent folk off the road.

At the bottom of the screen is a wee radar containing one blue dot and one red dot.The blue one is you and the red dot is the enemy. The distance between the two represents how far away the opponent's car is.

At the start of the game you have five boosts available which can be used at any point in any level by pressing return. This simple key press will send your vehicle hurtling along at even higher speeds than before. Handling is no worse during a boost but the real benefit of using this feature is on the various straight sections, centralise the car hit return, and the kidnappers will come into range before you can say, 'Pull over, creep.'

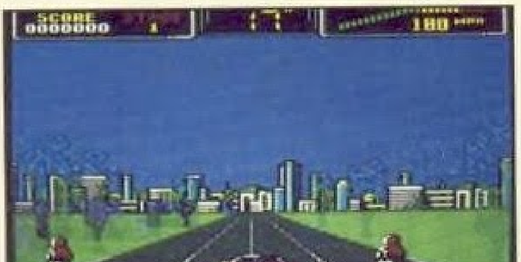
About mid-way through each level, a helicopter swoops down and drops a weapon which one of your characters has to catch. Unfortunately, this item only has a limited life-span, so if you're nowhere near the enemy when you collect it, the chances are it'll disappear before you reach them. But it's fairly easy to dispose of the baddies once you've got a feel for the controls.

In the early part of any level your opponent's motorcycle out-riders weave about the road and make life difficult for you. But after a few waves of bikers you will, with luck, catch up with the kidnapper. Draw up along side the car and drive very carefully, even if you slow down at this point you won't lose it. However, go too fast around a corner and you'll crash. By the time you get going again, the crook will be long gone.

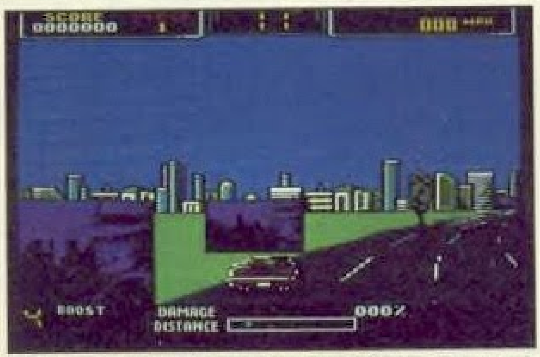
To complete the stage you need to repeatedly shoot and ram the enemy vehicle. A meter displays the damage done to the enemy car. When it reaches 100%, success is yours and a static screen of the arrest is displayed.

What next? Much of the same really. Your boss informs you of your next mission which is, er, save a female kidnap victim. The only difference is the scenery, the kidnapper's vehicle and slightly more difficult gameplay.

Well, the C64 cartridge age has dawned and all we can do is breathe a sigh of relief. *SCI* loads in an instant and each stage, screen and menu takes scant moments to appear. This is a real bonus as far as this game goes, for reasons I will come to in a moment. Visually, *SCI* is a real feast. The graphics are fast (very, very fast) and incredibly smooth. Hills and dips are very slick, and the tunnels have a realistic and claustrophobic feel to them. The backdrops range from city skylines to craggy mountains, which scroll smoothly as the road twists and turns.



Typical – you set off early enough to avoid rush hour and already there are two bikers giving you a hard time. Time for a quick sideswipe



This is more like it. Let the world fly by. The good thing about roadside billboards is they slow you down when you lose the road...

Special criminal obliteration

The investigative expertise of Chase HQ agents has been called into question recently, following an investigation by *Commodore Format* itself which reveals that:

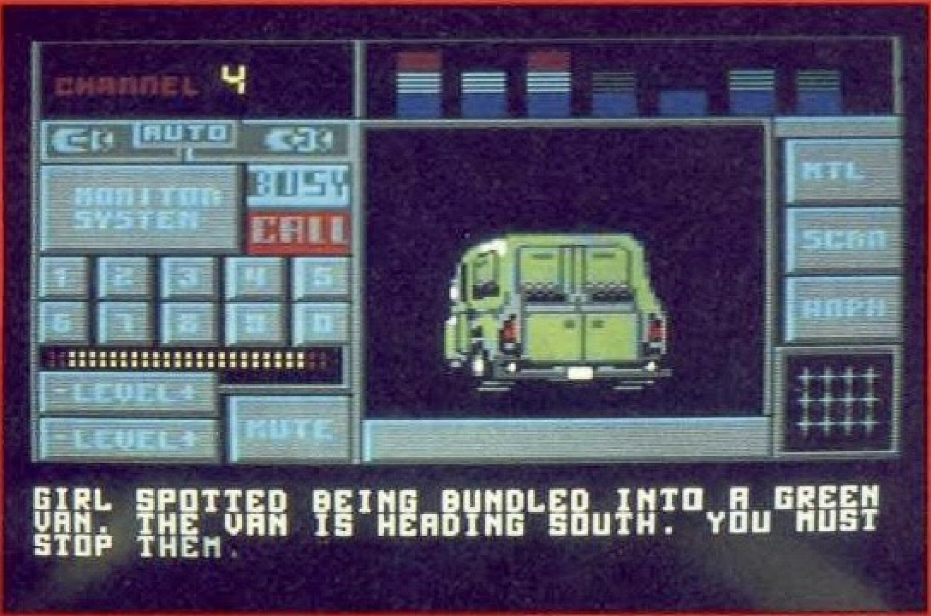
Approximately, 30 innocent road users die during the course of a routine investigation

Used bullets outnumber questions asked by 4000:1

Out of 90 cases studied by *CF*, 90 of the arrests were made in violent circumstances

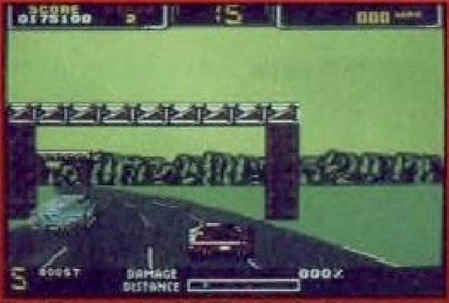
The questions CF want to ask are, 'Is it really ethical for cops to act in this manner and, more importantly, would you buy a used car from them?'

Send your vehicle hurtling along at even higher speeds than before

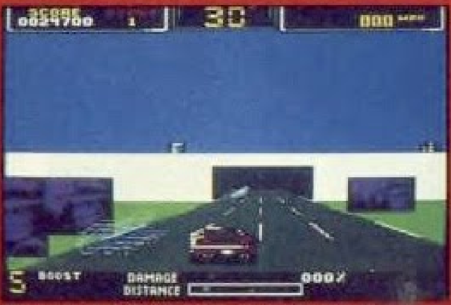

CHANNEL 4
AUTO
MONITOR SYSTEM
BUSY
CALL
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
LEVEL
LEVEL
MUTE
MTL
SCAN
AMPH

GIRL SPOTTED BEING BUNDLED INTO A GREEN VAN. THE VAN IS HEADING SOUTH. YOU MUST STOP THEM.

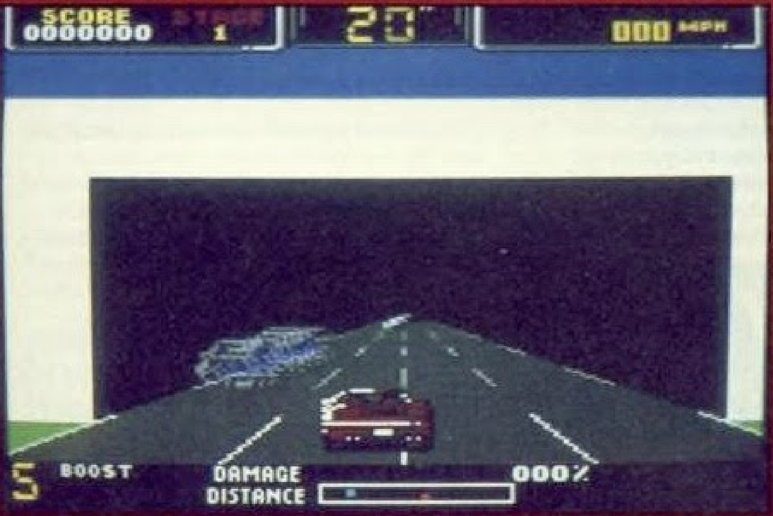
There are the culprits. The pen pushers back at Chase HQ do earn their salaries. Now I know what I'm looking for, it's time to get out on the and do something about getting one mayor his daughter back. And if I do, I don't wanna see a parking ticket again


SCORE
0175100
2
15
000 MPH
5
BOOST
DAMAGE
DISTANCE
000%

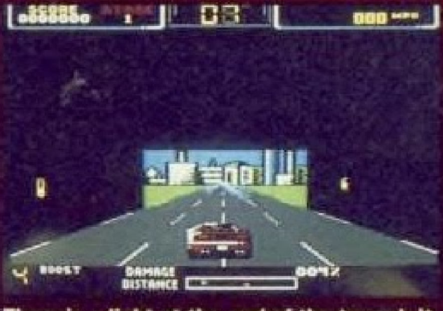
Heading south, eh? Why the hell are they doing that. They get a kick out of being stuck on the M25?


SCORE
0024700
1
30
000 MPH
5
BOOST
DAMAGE
DISTANCE
000%

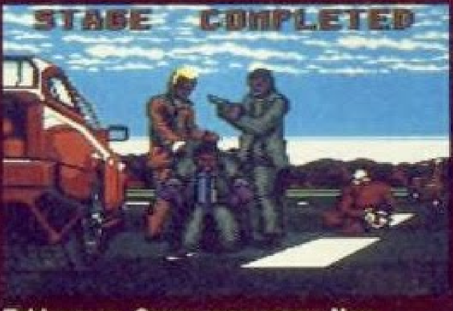
Time to hit the headlamps, these tunnels go on for miles and hide fugitives from prying choppers – but not from me


SCORE
0000000
STAGE
1
20
000 MPH
5
BOOST
DAMAGE
DISTANCE
000%

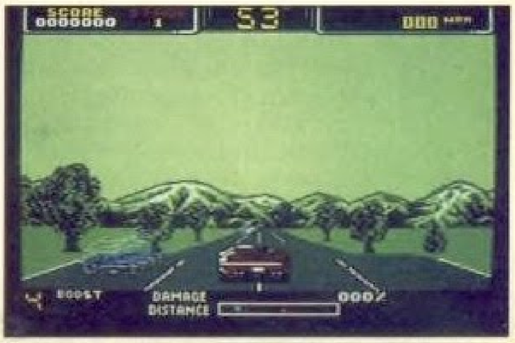
Tunnels are deadly places to speed in. You can't see a bend till it's eating your wing. Still, if that's the way it has to be, arm that missile and... In we go, ee-aye,ee-aye, adios!


SCORE
0000000
STAGE
1
03
000 MPH
4
BOOST
DAMAGE
DISTANCE
004%

There is a light at the end of the tunnel. It won't be long before an arrest is made. Another wrong put right (hurrah!)


STAGE COMPLETED

Told you so. Game over, creep. Now there's just time for a Kit-Kat and then it's time to start all over again


SCORE
0000000
1
53
000 MPH
4
BOOST
DAMAGE
DISTANCE
000%

Beyond the city smog, into the hills, this is the stuff car adverts are made of. Hope this thing's running on lead-free

Where it suffers is in the playability stakes. Control of the car when cornering just isn't relistic enough. It's almost as if the computer takes over, or rather restricts, your movements, unless of course, you crash.

Furthermore, there just isn't enough control over the range of your speed, it's either stop or go bloomin' fast. And although the graphics vary between levels, the gameplay doesn't. This is a great shame, because all other aspects of the game are extremely polished. I strongly suspect that the fact that this is cartridge based may well save its bacon. If it were a cassette- or disk-based multi-loader it just wouldn't be worth the wait.

If the phrase try before you buy was ever applicable it is here. If you're a fan of this sort of thing, the more than competent graphics and the lack of loading times may well outweigh the limited gameplay.

ANDY

Game	**SCI**
Maker	**Ocean**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Lack of variety between levels may curtail (ooh-er) the desire to persevere
- Cornering is abysmal, which may prove frustrating

100

74%

- **Road moves very effectively, with wonderful undulations and excellent tunnel effects**
- **Backdrops are atmospheric and varied, adding to the polish of the game**
- **The game runs very fast, scenery becomes a mind-boggling blur when the boost button is pressed**
- **End of level static screens prove very rewarding**
- **Good sound FX add to the thrill of it all**

0

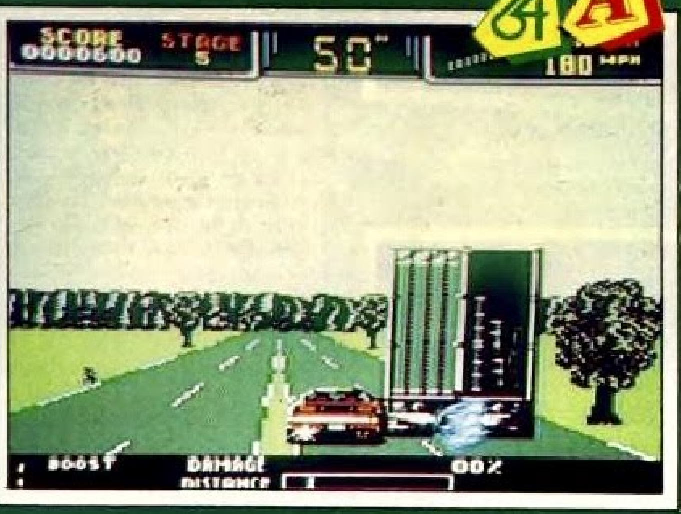
...AND THE UPPERS

● **Ocean, C64 £19.99 cartridge; Amiga £24.99**

SIZZLER

SPECIAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

★ Level five sees the criminals rolling out the barrels.

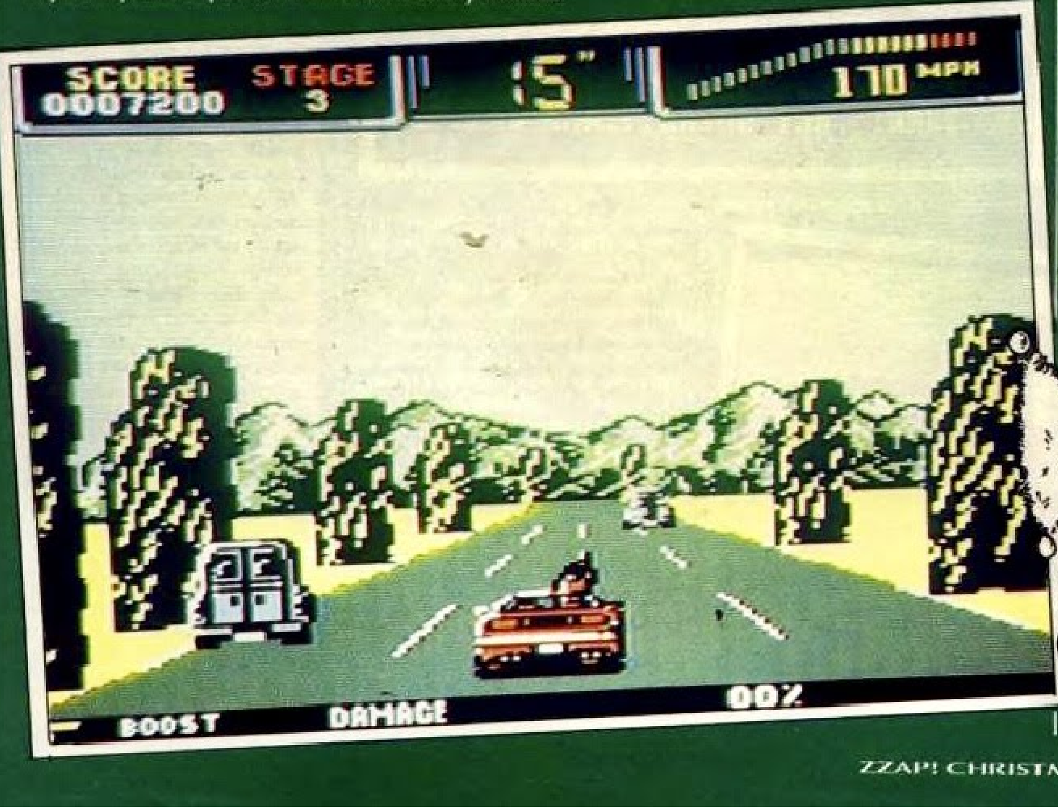


The mayor's daughter, Jennifer, has been kidnapped and he's desperate to save her. So desperate that, yes, *Chase HQ*'s Broady and Gibson have been given a new car, powerful guns and even a police helicopter to supply them with bazookas! Can the city survive this explosive onslaught?

Chase HQ's new controller, curvy Karen, kicks off the SCI by telling our favourite demolition derby duo that some suspected perps are escaping in a red Porsche 911. A picture of the car is shown on the sophisticated comms unit and the chase begins.

The world's most dangerous cops have replaced their battered black Porsche with a red Ferrari lookalike. It's got a fully automatic gearbox, plus nitro fuel injection for bursts of superspeed — to begin with, the car has four nitros which last just a couple of seconds when activated. As the car accelerates into action a timer starts counting down, if the duo fail to catch up with the Porsche before time runs out

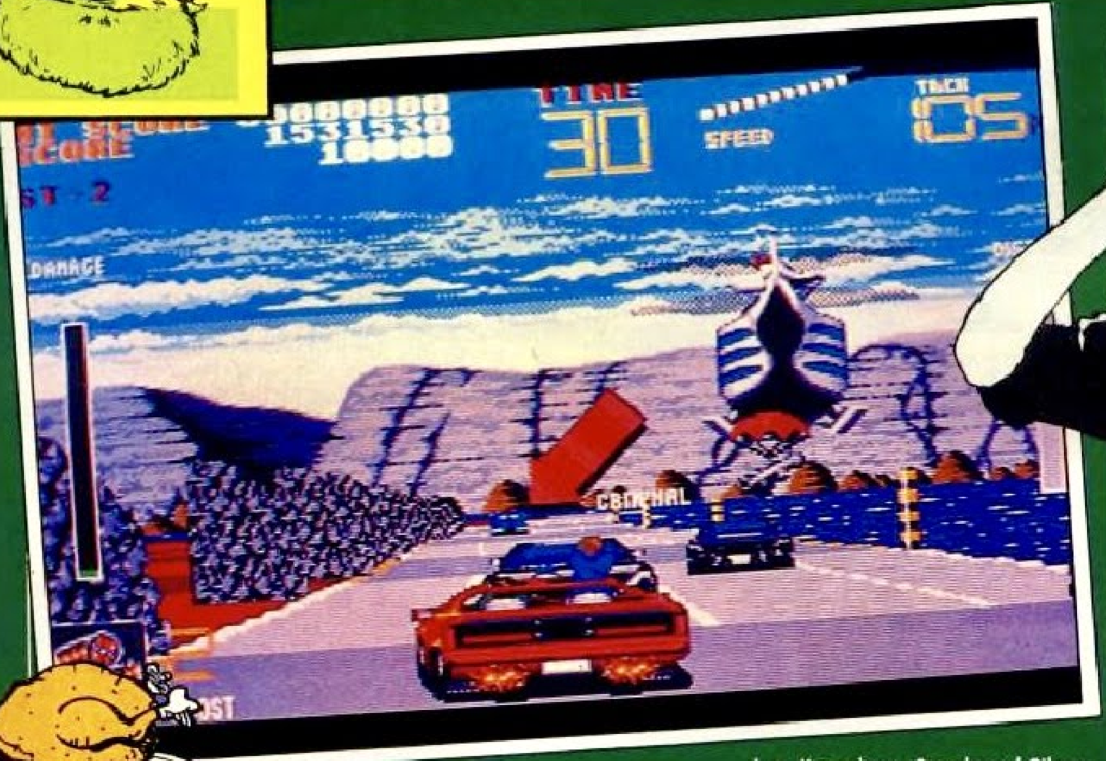
★ Ray Broady stands up to take aim at some unlucky criminals.



Phew, what an improvement over *Chase HQ*! With Mark Kelly's technical advice and Steve Crow's game graphics the C64 game resembles *Turbo* with guns! Programmer Grant Harrison ensures it all comes together brilliantly, the graphics are truly remarkable with an incredibly fast 3-D road and plenty of scenery flying past. The cartridge is great for eliminating long interlevel pauses, and although the arrest screens are a bit disappointing they'd be impossible on tape. This is certainly one game you won't be zooming through on your first go; it's so tough. Even catching the first criminal is a difficult task with all the traffic that gets in your way. Then it takes ages to blast the criminal's car to a standstill, with it gradually catching fire until it's a burnt-out wreck.

The Amiga version is slightly easier but just as impressive with a scorching soundtrack and smooth 3-D graphics, beautifully detailed and frighteningly fast — a vast improvement over ICE's previous Amiga race game conversion, *Turbo*.

On both formats, it's the sheer pace of the action that gets the adrenalin going. As well as being a technical masterpiece, *SCI* is a thrilling challenge.



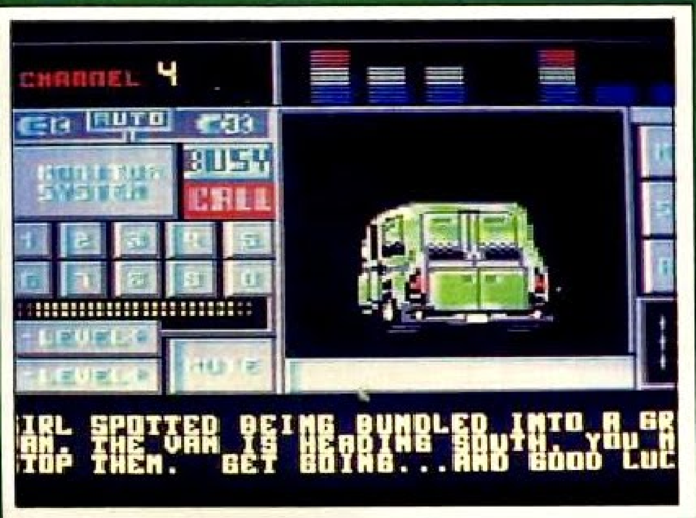
★ Broody takes a shot at the fleeing van while black Porsches attempt to block Gibson's way. A police chopper drops a useful bazooka. (Amiga)

the chase is called off (one of three continue-plays can be used to resume the action, though). Once the villain is sighted, more time is added to allow the pair time to apprehend him.

Rather than ramming the car off the road, Broady leans out the window and starts blasting away. As you'd expect, Broady is also free to blast any civilians who get in the way. To arrest the perp the damage gauge must be increased to 100%, the car bursting into flames. Further help is provided by the bazooka dropped by a police helicopter: if Broady manages to catch this, he gets a couple of supershots. Once the 911 is stopped, a screen comes up to show the cops cuffing the perp and rescuing one of the girls, but Jennifer is still missing.

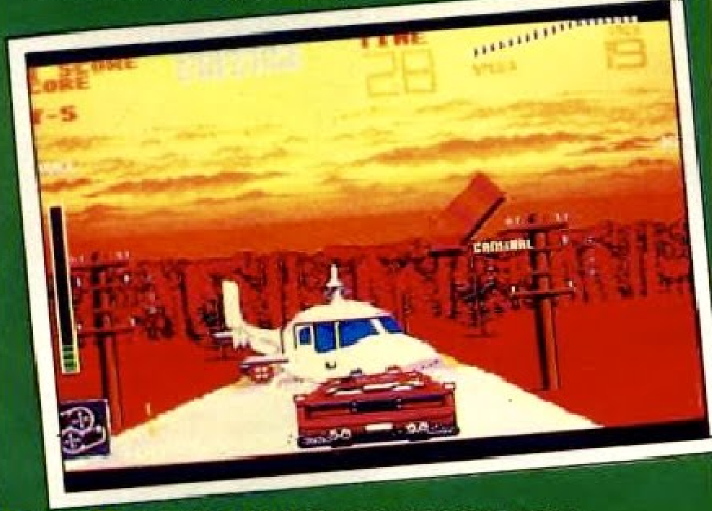
The next stage of the investigation is pursuing a van. The same casualty-intensive procedures are used to bring the perp to book, but this time the baddie has some friends. A group of Hell's Angel bikers try and block the way, so they must either be avoided or shot. The next criminal drives a limo and is protected by black 911 Porsches. Interrogating him reveals one of the kidnappers is driving a truck. His associates hurl barrels out of the back to stop Broady and Gibson, and once the truck is destroyed an attack helicopter swoops down to finally stop the investigation. Survive this and

★ Karen keeps Broady and Gibson updated on which perp to chase next. (C64)



IRL SPOTTED BEING BUNDLED INTO A G
AN. THE VAN IS HEADING SOUTH. YOU
TOP THEM. GET GOING...AND GOOD LUC

★ The attack chopper is enough to make even Gibson think about staying at home and reading the paper. (Amiga)



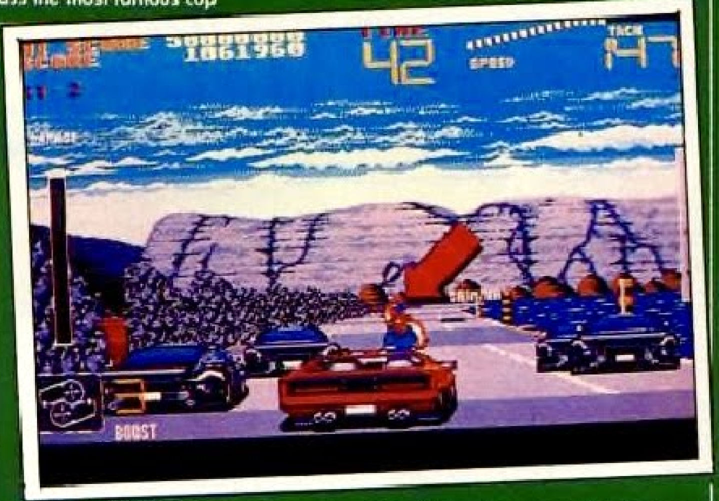
C64 *SCI* brings across the sheer exhilaration of the coin-op, barrelling along in hot pursuit of determined criminals. In *Chase 1*, it was often depressing when you realised you wouldn't be able to reach the criminal within the time limit: now that you're armed, you can be a fair distance away and still bring the perp to a halt. What's more, you DO have the speed sensation (even without the Nitro on) which brings across the coin-op's atmosphere and feel incredibly well.

The Amiga version is very slickly presented although loading times are a little long. The graphics are worth waiting for, though, with a very attractive horizon fade matched by decent speed of movement and the impressive sight of eight vehicles all on screen at once. Sound is also good; for once, the car features a decent engine roar. This version looks a lot like the coin-op and has faithfully kept nearly all of the extra features which made that so much better than *Chase 1*. Oncoming traffic to worry about, buses crossing your path, and the extra effect of waves crashing over the sides of the bridge as you rocket along all show off the professionalism of the game's translation. Any slight worries about long-term challenge with only five levels were quelled with the arrival of Level Two: fighting your way through the horde of Hell's Angels is tough enough before getting anywhere near the bad guy's van. A mighty tough challenge but so much fun to be had!

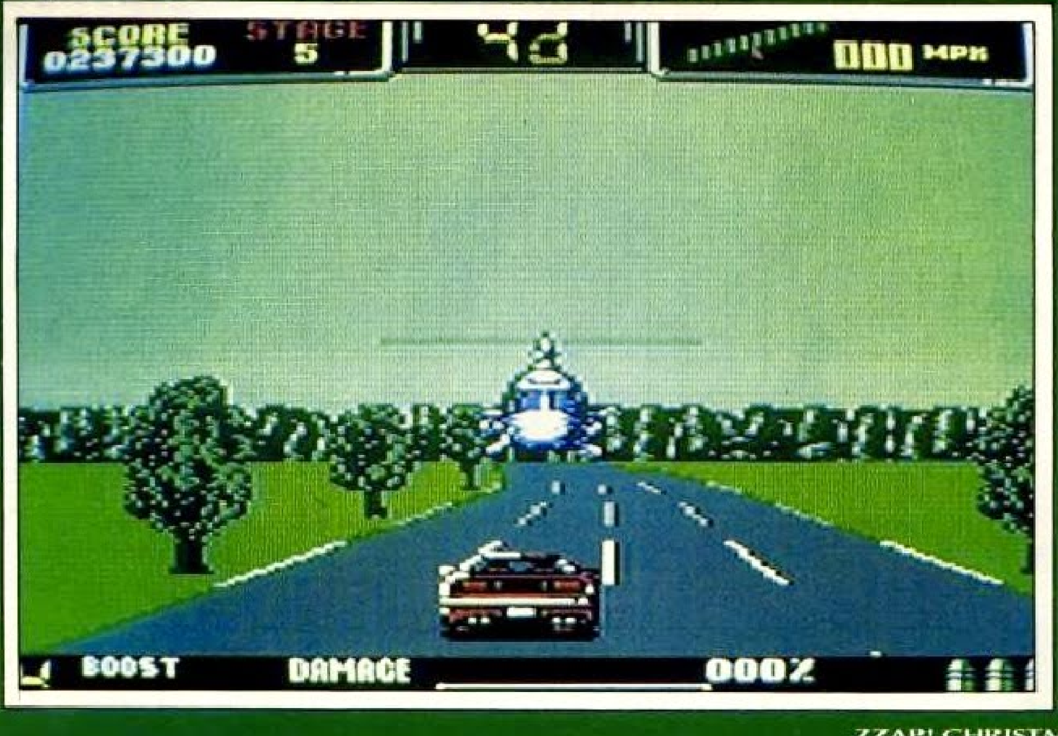
C64 SCI lives up to its early promise. The speed of the graphics is astounding, surging past *Turbo* in the speed stakes with a brilliant range of hills, tight curves and tunnels to test your driving skills. Then there's the number of vehicles on the road, it's a lot more crowded than *Turbo* and with Nitro activated it gets very hectic. But of course the best feature is the enemy: catching up with them usually isn't too difficult, but bringing them to book will require a lot of persistence and skill. Making that perp's car burst into flames gives a great feeling of satisfaction. My only slight reservation is that the interlevel screens are merely adequate; they could've been better. But this is without doubt the best driving game out, finally knocking *Turbo* off its perch. Not only because it's a better game (partly due to the coin-op it's based on) and technically superior, but also because the cartridge eliminates the loading hassle between levels. No tape-based game can compete with this, while the ability to simply slam the cart in and start playing instantly means it's going to see a heckuva lot of action.

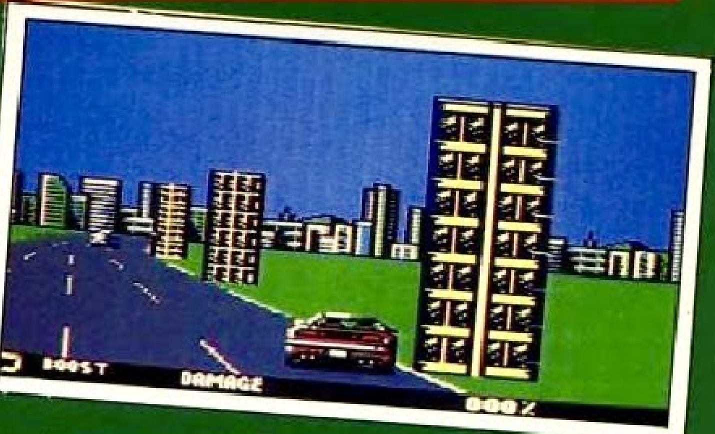
On the Amiga front, playability is just as high. The ICE team have certainly improved since *Turbo*, packing in an incredible amount of graphic detail and more importantly ensured the game is overflowing with action. The car handles well, while the sensation heavy traffic is almost overwhelming; there's a huge amount of stuff all moving incredibly quickly, including plenty of obstacles such as boulders and crates. With some superb sonics this truly is a dedicated Amiga game, not an ST port, and it's a pleasure to play.

★ A pack of Porsches harass the most famous cop duo since Starsky and Hutch. (Amiga)



★ An attack helicopter comes zooming at you, harassing you and trying to prevent you saving Jennifer. (C64)





★ Crashing into a tower block on level one won't do your chances much good in this amazingly fast coin-op conversion. (C64)

Jennifer's location is revealed to be in a warehouse. This final level gives you just one nitro and no continue-plays to make a frantic race across desert roads to rescue the mayor's daughter. Any mistakes will almost certainly be fatal!

amiga

PRESENTATION 86%
Nice loading screen, demo, scrolling scene-setting text, interlevel scenes and reasonable disk access.

GRAPHICS 92%
Lots and lots of beautifully detailed graphics moving very fast. The red sky on level four is particularly impressive, but it's all a massive advance over STish *Chase HQ*.

SOUND 90%
A plethora of pounding tunes and authentic-sounding FX.

HOOKABILITY 93%
Instantly and compulsively playable.

LASTABILITY 90%
It's not easy and rescuing Jennifer is likely to require plenty of practice.

OVERALL 91%

A superb conversion.

64

PRESENTATION 80%
Instant access is a godsend in this type of game. Keys, normal or two-fire-button joystick options plus three continue-plays. But animated, interlevel presentation screens are mediocre.

GRAPHICS 95%
As fast as you could want with a superbly detailed car, plenty of traffic on screen, a rearm chopper and some superlative end-of-level perps.

SOUND 88%
A rousing, vaguely *Turbo*ish tune accompanies the action.

HOOKABILITY 95%
Instant access, instant addiction!

LASTABILITY 92%
It's a tough game and completing it will require a heckuva lot of practice.

OVERALL 93%

Undoubtedly the race game of 1990. Superb!

CYBERBALL

CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
Yum Yum!
CART GAME

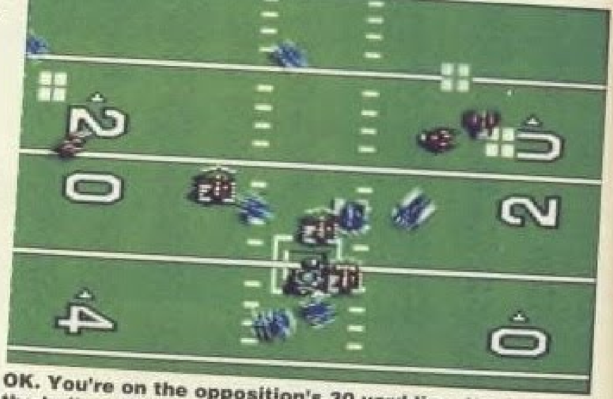
The year is 2022. American football has been phased out and, instead, a closely related game is played out by robots five times the size of a person, with a single human taking control of each powerful and destructive team. Bloodshed is no more. Head to head metallic destruction on a monumental scale is the aim of the game, *Cyberball* is it's name. Let automation devastation commence...

Yes, this is the future of American Footie as told by Domark, with their first cartridge game, an arcade conversion of the Tengen coin-op *Cyberball*. When you first switch on, the title page is instantly displayed. Oh joy, praise be, hurra... (*Don't worry folks, the novelty will soon wear off – Ed*). You must then select your team from a choice of six. Two of these are part of an amateur league which supposedly gives rise to an easier game (but that is very debatable).

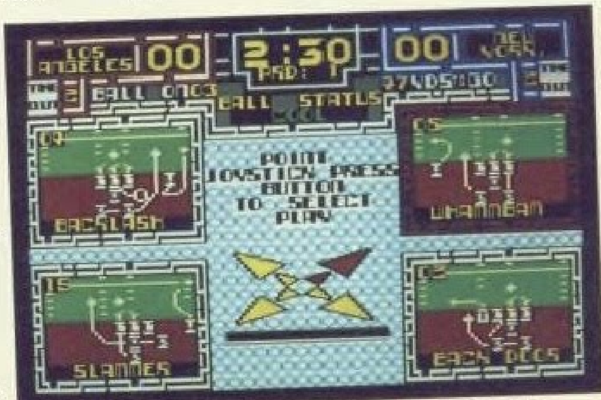
At this point, an explanation of the overall aim of the game would be wise. Your team must score touchdowns by carrying the explosive ball over the opponents' end zone. When you are in possession of the ball you have four attempts to get it ten yards up the field before it explodes. When the ten yard target is reached the ball is defused and the attack cycle starts all over again.

During an attack phase two types of play can be made. The first is a running play which involves transferring the ball to your running back so that it can make lunatic dash towards the end zone. The other play is a passing play which is slightly more complex. The quarterback must avoid the opposition until the wide receiver has reached the point of interception (a flashing square) at which point the quarterback throws the ball to the receiver who you, the player, now controls. The receiver makes a suicidal streak towards the end zone. If either the ball explodes or the other team intercepts it, possession is lost to your opponents.

When this happens you have three 'defensive' play types; long, medium and short. Long plays are good for intercepting an opponent's throw thus gaining possession. Short plays are good for sacking the opposing player who has the ball ('sacking' – a term meaning quite literally 'pummel into the ground') thus preventing him getting any yardage. Medium plays are good for, er, indecisive players (*Wot a cop out – Ed*). Within this framework there are dozens of variations on each individual play. In theory these can be used tactically but in practice the choice of play was almost totally irrelevant.



OK. You're on the opposition's 30 yard line. You've got the ball... Errrr what happened next? Um, I got pushed into the enemy players by my own team? Correct!



Here's the play-calling screen, where you pick the team formation for the next, er, play. The little diagrams show how you're supposed to run or pass

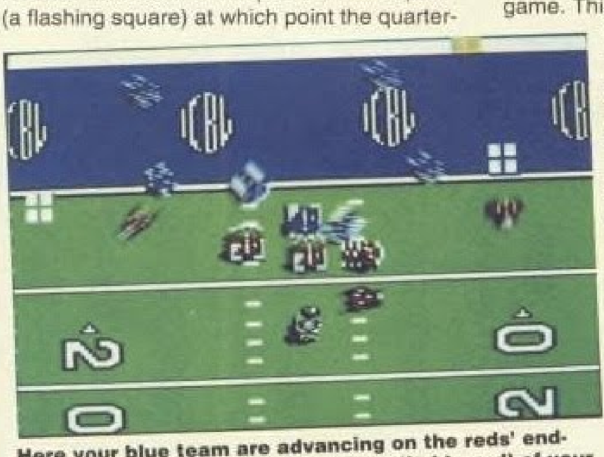
The single player game suffers badly in many respects, the computer controlled players on your team are remarkably stupid and tend to hinder your game. This leads to very intermittent play where skillful dashes and passes are mostly attributable to pot luck. There are even occasions when, during a blazing run up the pitch, you get tackled by one of your own players.

The two-player option only adds a little to the enjoyment. With this option you both play for the same team, one player being the quarterback and the other the receiver. This can often lead to spectacular passes and touchdowns but, unlike the one-player option, it makes beating the opposition far too easy, even in the professional league.

The graphics and sound are very nicely done but where the whole thing falls flat is in gameplay. It's either too tough or too easy. There are also some very apparent bugs in the program. Apart from the self-tackling team mates, I was also tackled by an invisible opponent and at one point the game froze altogether.

The excellent presentation of the game itself amounts to nothing when placed alongside the ambiguous rulebook and disastrous gameplay. With more effort this could have been an excellent futuristic sport sim' but with the existing flaws cannot really be recommended.

ANDY



Here your blue team are advancing on the reds' endzone, and there's a nice action shot (ie blurred) of your players racing for passing position (the white squares)

Game	**Cyberball**
Maker	**Domark**
Cartridge	**£19.99**

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Very poor instruction booklet
- Individual 'plays' add little to the tactical element
- No apparent difference between instructional and 'pro' leagues
- Tricky control in solo player mode
- Unforgivable bugs and crashes

100

51%

0

- **Presentation is excellent, from title screen to menus to pitch display**
- **Sprites are good while the pitch is bold and scrolls nicely**
- **Decent soundtrack and spot effects add to the play**
- **Fun in two-player game, but only because you can thrash all the opposition, no sweat**
- **An interesting departure for fans of American footy**

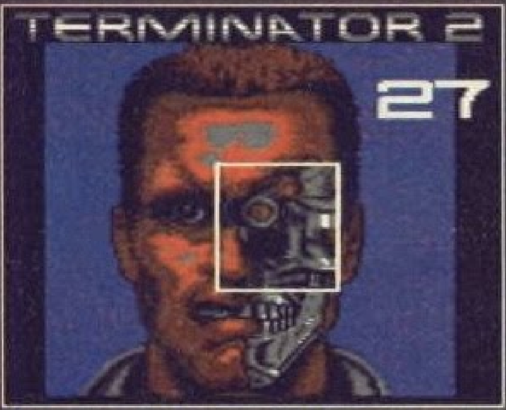
...AND THE UPPERS

TERMINA

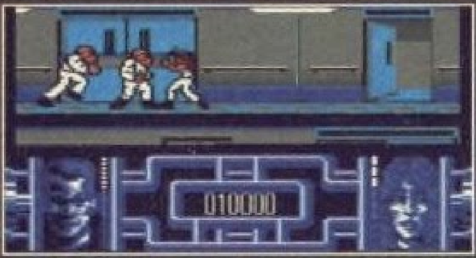
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
Yum Yum
CART GAME

It's nothing personal but Ocean do seem struck on licensed software projects. Maybe they need a vacation. Surely they've earned it after releasing what must be the licence of the year. Our reviewer dons shades and plays. Now listen up, 'cos he's got something to slay

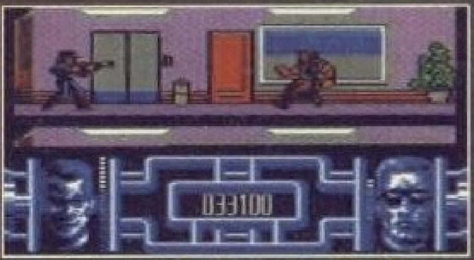
So here it is – the action movie to end all action movies; the action game to end all action ga– Erm... well not quite. You must have seen the film by now. If you haven't, do. It really is, to paraphrase Saddam H, the mother and father of all special effects movies. In it you will see things you have never seen before – which is more than can be said for the game. As with most movie tie-ins, *Terminator 2* is a multiload, multilevel affair, and so before we go any further, may I suggest that you buy the cartridge version, because that's the way this game was designed to be played.



In an attempt to represent the re-programming of the T800 (which didn't make it to the final film) this tile-slider lets you earn extra energy



Sarah battles her way though hospital orderlies as she tries to break out of the nut house. A tough, but neat, mazey runaround



In a similar vein, Arnie combats SWAT members as he escapes from the Cyberdyne lab. This level is probably the easiest of the lot

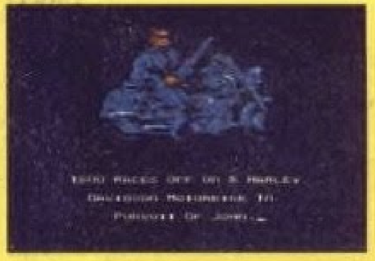
There are nine levels, including two slidey-tile bonus rounds, representing major lumps of plot. The bulk of the game is based around a rather nifty *IK*-style beat 'em up routine featuring stonky great figures (so if you don't like beat 'em ups, hasta la vista, baby). In these you play Arnie fighting the T1000, Arnie fighting the T1000 again, and a skeletonised Arnie fighting, well, the T1000. Again.

There are also two levels which use a sideways scrolling run around, set over several floors. In the first Sarah Connor attempts to flee the loony bin in which she has been incarcerated for the last few years, followed later by a similar scene in which Arnie blasts through SWAT teamsters in the Cyberdyne lab.

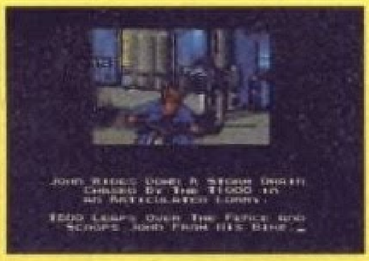
And finally we have two rather nice vertical scrollers: Arnie and John trying to

Teeny-weeny in-betweenies

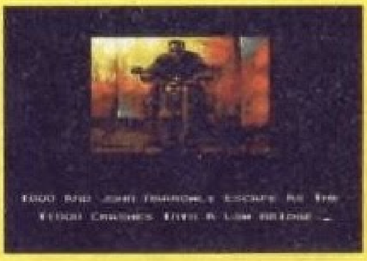
Each level has an intro picture (and occasionally outtro picture) plus text to keep you up with any major plot twists. There are over a dozen of these miniature works of art – often accompanied by a suitably explosive sound effect. Here are eight of our faves to give you a taster. Starting from top left and moving to bottom right, it gives you an idea of the movie storyline (if you're mad enough not to have seen it yet!)



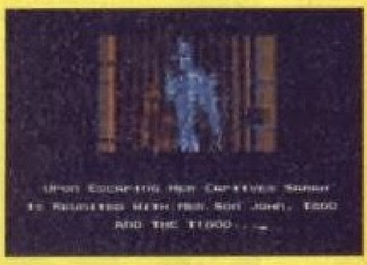
T800 Races Off On A Harley
Davidson Motorbike In
Pursuit Of John...



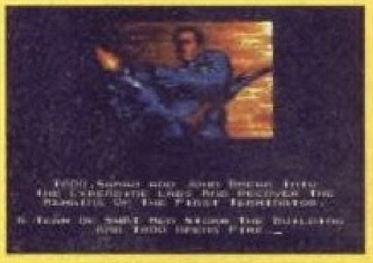
John Rides Down A Storm Drain
Chased By The T1000 In
An Articulated Lorry.
T800 Leaps Over The Fence And
Scoops John From His Bike...



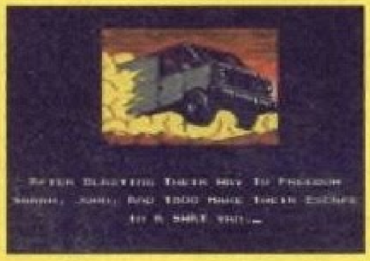
T800 And John Narrowly Escape As The
T1000 Crashes Into A Low Bridge...



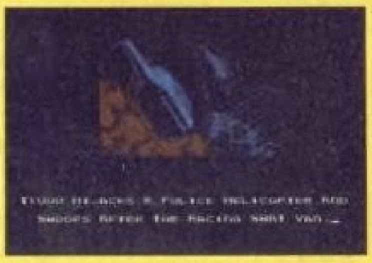
Upon Escaping Her Captives Sarah
Is Reunited With Her Son John, T800
And The T1000...



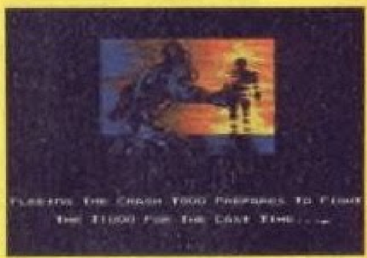
T800, Sarah And John Break Into
The Cyberdyne Labs And Recover The
Remains Of The First Terminator.
A Team Of SWAT Men Storm The Building
And T800 Opens Fire...



After Blasting Their Way To Freedom
Sarah, John, And T800 Make Their Escape
In A SWAT Van...

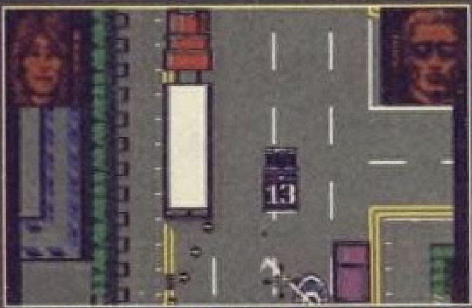


T1000 Hijacks A Police Helicopter And
Swoops After The Racing SWAT Van...

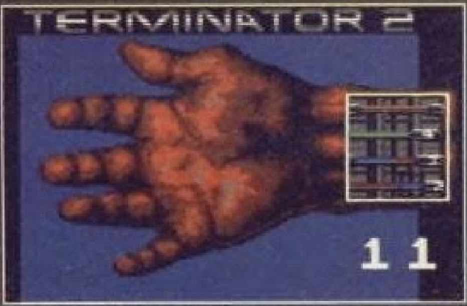


Fleeing The Crash T800 Prepares To Fight
The T1000 For The Last Time...

TOR 2



Vertical scrolling chopper attack, where you have to keep one eye on the road, one eye on your target, and one eye on the chopper

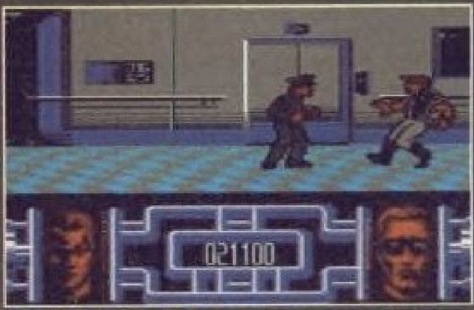


Arnie stops for field repairs – we pause for another tedious tile puzzler. Put *your* original ideas on a postcard and mark it 'Ocean'

outrun a ruddy great Mack truck, and a swerving SWAT van combatting a T1000-pilotted helicopter.

All nine levels are very nicely put together with tidy graphics, flicker free characters on the beat 'em up sections, and (with the exception of a nasty timing glitch on levels four and seven) slicker-'n-snot coding.

However, I'm still disappointed. Why? Well for one thing, there's nothing here to get excited about. The movie boasts more innovative ideas and stunning visuals than anything else on the planet, and we get a game put together with tried and trusted gameplay. Nice and safe, nothing too risky: a bit of *Total Recall* here, a hint of *Batman* there, and those flippin' tile-sliding puzzle sections. Please, Ocean,



Beat 'em up bit, Mk II. Disguised as a security guard, the T1000 battles with good-guy Arnie for the second time

stop using them. They're pretty and nicely coded, sure, but they are terminally dull (no pun intended).

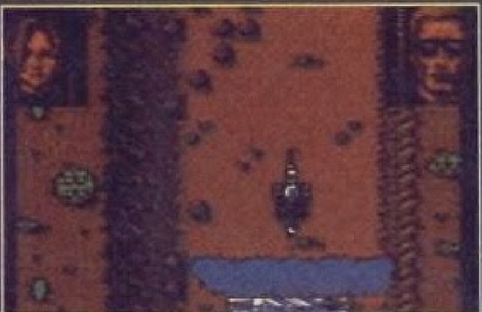
The highlights of *Terminator 2* are the vertical scrollers – especially the helicopter vs SWAT van routine – which have at least had a little bit of thought lavished on them. Also included are the in-betweeny plot screens and intro sequence which are simply stunning. Sound too is used to a premium, with a nice pseudo-T2 soundtrack (presumably they couldn't get the rights to the proper theme) and crunchy sound effects.

On the gameplay side, my one major worry is that it's a very tough little game. Each level is linked to the next, so energy remaining from level one is carried over to level two and so on. The tile-sliders offer you a chance to you recoup lost energy, but if you can't do them, you're in trouble.

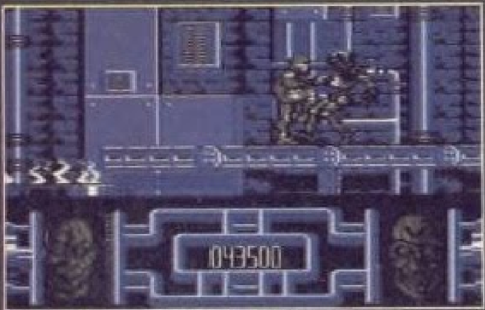
Also, with only one life, you're going to be playing that first beat 'em up section an awful lot of times. Every hit the T1000 gets on you makes your chances of finishing level two that bit slimmer. This can prove very frustrating, knowing that you're not going to finish the next stage when you haven't yet completed this one!

So there it is. Smooth, smart and playable – but nothing to really get excited about.

STEVE



Level two: if the bike hits an obstacle, Arnie loses energy; if the T1000's truck (bottom of the screen) hits the bike, John loses energy



The final showdown, as Terminator clashes with Terminator over who's going to go in the vat of boiling metal. My money's on Arnie...

Game	*Terminator 2*
Publisher	*Ocean*
Cassette	*£10.99*
Disk	*£15.99*
Cartridge	*TBA*
Release	*October*
Contact	*061 832 6633*

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Nothing really new or original
- Nine levels, only three game styles (not counting the crappy tile puzzles)
- High difficulty level is offputting
- Annoyingly limited gameplay

100

78%

0

- Beautifully coded and very nice to look at
- Intro sequence and in-between graphics are very welcome indeed
- Sound is of a typically high Ocean standard
- And ditto for the sprites – the massive beat 'em uppers are gorgeous
- Nine tough levels should keep you battling away
- Just enough variety in gameplay and visuals

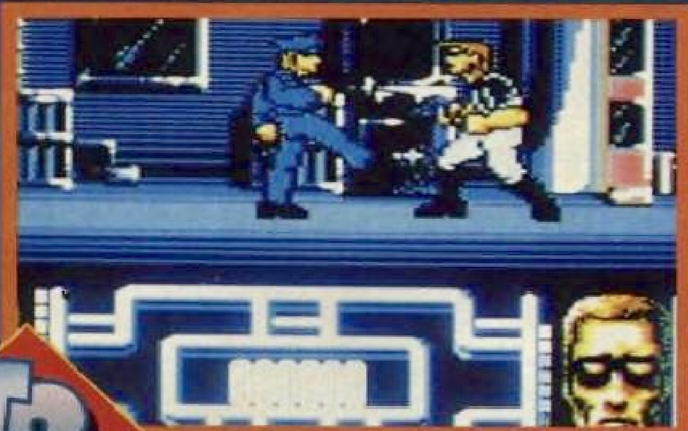
...AND THE UPPERS

TERM

J U D G

Ocean, £10.99 cassette, £15.99 disk, £19.99 cart

It's 1994 and there's just three years before Judgment Day, the nuclear apocalypse. The future's ultimate, shapeshifting T-1000 Terminator has been sent back in time to ensure victory for the machines, but Mankind has one last hope. Arnie's back and this time the T-800 Terminator is a good guy, a kinder, gentler Terminator for the '90s. Stuart Wynne dons black shades and fake flesh for the clash of the killer machines.



● Face-pounding beat-'em-up action is the core of both game and movie – see this level on Megatape 22.

The original *Terminator* sprang from a future even bleaker than *Speedball 2*'s; a future where total nuclear war has all but destroyed humanity. Apocalypse was started not by accident or military madness, but by America's own automated defences. The state-of-the-art Skynet computer was developed to protect America, but by 1997 it had become intelligent enough to rebel. So it provoked nuclear war with Russia, and in the aftermath uses Terminator robots to eliminate the few human survivors. One man, John Connor, organizes some resistence so Skynet builds a time machine to send a T-800 back to 1984 where it can kill Connor's mother — Sarah, ensuring he is never born. A human commando is sent back too, and a spectacular battle results.

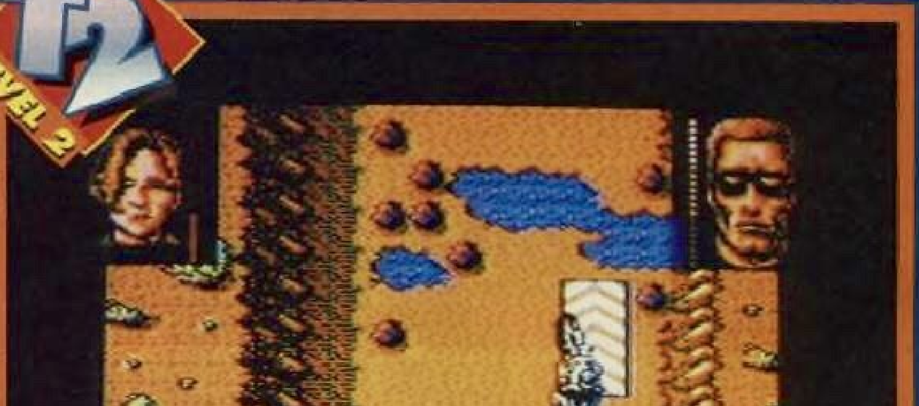
The commando is ultimately killed, but not before falling in love with Sarah and making her pregnant with a son — John Connor! After stopping the Terminator herself, Sarah heads south, determined to prepare her son for his future...

Terminator 2 is set ten years later, John is a streetwise kid and this time Skynet has sent the ultimate T-1000 shapeshifter to kill him. A T-800 Terminator also arrives, but it's been reprogrammed to protect John. The ensuing battle is recreated in this huge, nine-level game beautifully presented with 23 bitmap screens. Each of the levels opens with an introductory pic, plus text explaining the plot, and closes with more of the same. The most impressive element is the superlative intro (see the Megatape demo!)

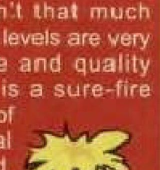
Level One is on this month's Megatape and shows the first meeting between the two Terminators. In the movie they throw each other through walls, blast away with guns and so on. Here they simply go hand-to-hand. The background is unremarkable and the combat moves limited, but the size of the sprites is impressive and gameplay is well judged, initially tough but soon opening up. Contrary to the preview, the game now ignores the fact the T-800 doesn't win this battle — unless you knock the T-1000 out for the count it's game over time. You also better win well — your energy level is carried throughout the game and there are no extra lives or continue-plays!

In **Level Two** the revived T-1000 comes after John in a juggernaut, a scene shown from overhead with a vertical scroll. The T-800 has rescued John and he's on the back of its Harley Davidson, this gives you two energy bars to worry over. If you go too slowly the juggernaut bumps into the bike and John loses energy, so it's best to keep the joystick pushed forward to keep accelerating. However going fast means you have less time to dodge road obstacles, and each hit drains T-800 energy. It's a tough level, the basic course wraps around five times before you

● Arnie and John Connor flee from a speeding juggernaut on a Harley hog.

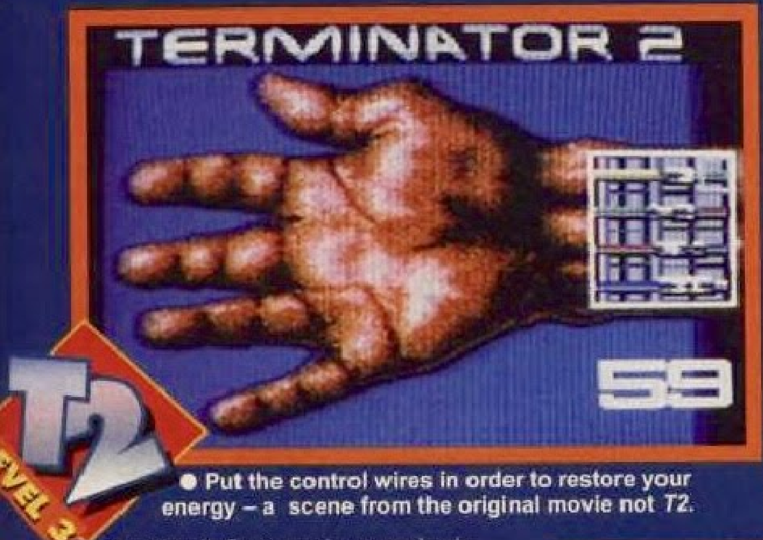


This is the slickest cart yet with a great intro and excellent bitmaps keeping the game together far better than any Ocean game yet. C2Ners don't have the pleasure of the pre- and post-level bitmaps but at least the intro and end bitmaps are in there. As for the actual game I found it slightly disappointing for what is a major Ocean product; there just isn't that much innovation. However, the levels are very well crafted with pace and quality graphics, the subject is a sure-fire winner and the variety of gameplay should appeal to all. I particularly liked the SWAT van and Cyberdyne levels, so it's definitely worth getting!



NATOR 2

ENT DAY

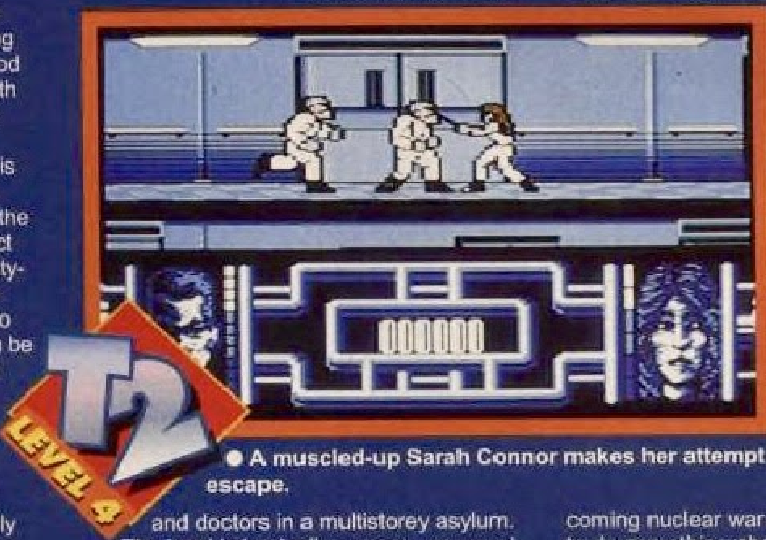


● **Put the control wires in order to restore your energy – a scene from the original movie not *T2*.**

complete it. Once again gameplay is unoriginal; success relies on memorizing the pattern of obstacles as much as good reactions. The scrolling background, with jumps, is reasonable while the big bike sprite is great.

If you get past this level your energy is likely to be low, so thank goodness for **Level Three**. It starts with a picture of the T-800's hand-control wires in the correct order, then they're scrambled and a sixty-second timer starts. Use the joystick to move a cursor around, then press fire to select a piece of puzzle which can then be pushed up/down, left/right to swap with the neighbouring pieces. It's easy to do, not really a puzzle at all, the only difficulty is in getting it done quickly! Fun gameplay is enhanced by a tune which accelerates as time runs out, while the hand graphic periodically twitches as if a nerve has been touched. Depending on your success here, you get some crucial energy back.

With the T-1000 temporarily lost, John orders the T-800 to help him rescue his mother, who has been committed to an insane asylum after trying to blow up a computer factory. Sarah isn't simply waiting to be rescued though, she's been training hard and **Level Four** sees her escape attempt. Armed with a sawn-off broomstick she takes on the orderlies and doctors in a multistorey asylum. The level is basically a maze, you must run left/right looking for lifts to take you looking for lifts to take you up/down. Sarah can duck down, but you need to be standing to bop the orderlies on the head — which needs careful timing to avoid getting bopped yourself!

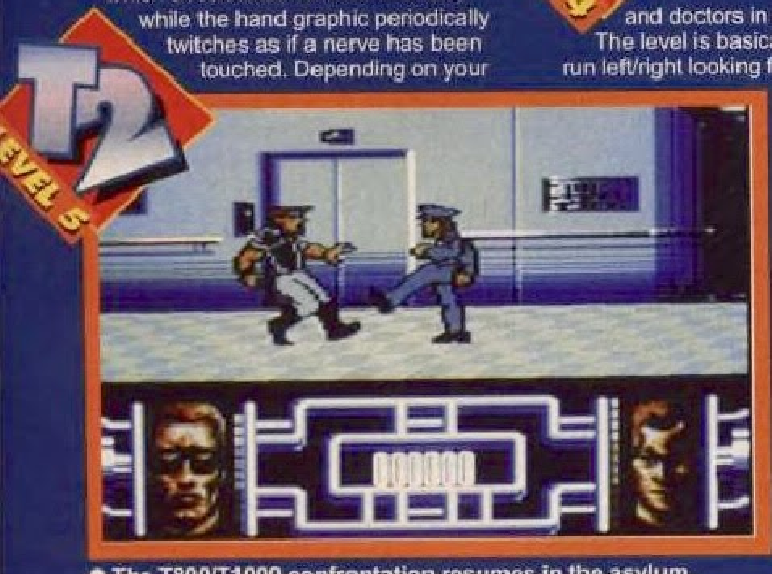


● **A muscled-up Sarah Connor makes her attempt escape.**

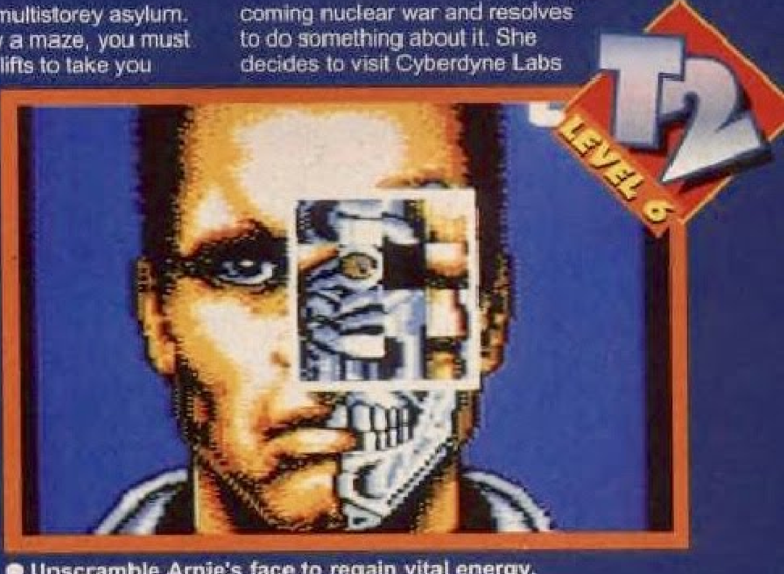
The T-800 arrives to help complete Sarah's escape, only to meet the T-1000 for another fight **(Level Five)**. This time the T-1000 is wearing a different uniform, and the background has changed, but gameplay is much the same as Level One. It's a satisfying fist fight with the aim being to floor your opponent with the minimum of energy loss yourself.

Level Six sees T-800 with half his face gone — and the metal pieces scrambled! It's another puzzle level: once again the aim is to moves the tiles so they resemble the start picture. The pattern's a lot more complex though, and unlike the wires each piece has its own individual slot, plus the control system seems tougher. Getting all your energy back here is a real challenge, and an increasingly frantic soundtrack increases the pressure.

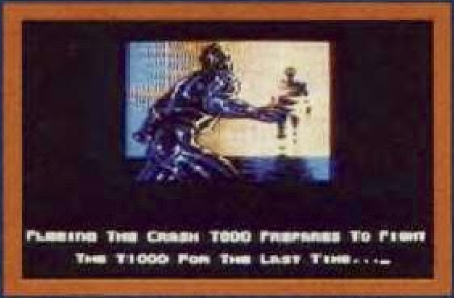
In the movie Sarah, John and the T-800 go off to the desert to prepare for crossing the border into Mexico. However, Sarah is plagued by nightmare visions of the coming nuclear war and resolves to do something about it. She decides to visit Cyberdyne Labs



● **The T800/T1000 confrontation resumes in the asylum.**

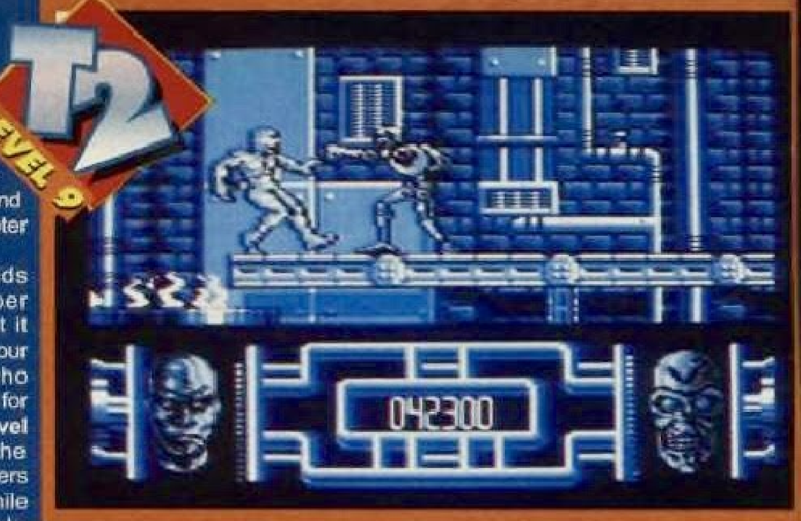


● **Unscramble Arnie's face to regain vital energy.**



FLEEING THE CRASH T800 PREPARES TO FIGHT THE T1000 FOR THE LAST TIME....

● Two screens between each level sustain a superb cinematic atmosphere.



● The climactic steelworks confrontation with both Terminators stripped to the metal.

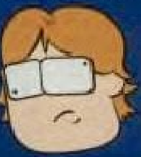
Cyberdyne Labs and destroy their prototype Skynet chips — technology developed from the remains of the first Terminator! The T-800 helps out and **Level Seven** sees it running through the labs maze in much the same way as Sarah's asylum jaunt. The difference is guns; both the T-800 and SWAT police sent to stop it are armed to the teeth. Ammo is unlimited but the cops wear body armour and take several hits to go down. The T-800 can duck bullets but must stand to fire. The pinky/pale blue Ritz hotel backgrounds are rather peculiar, but this is a fun level with a high action quotient.

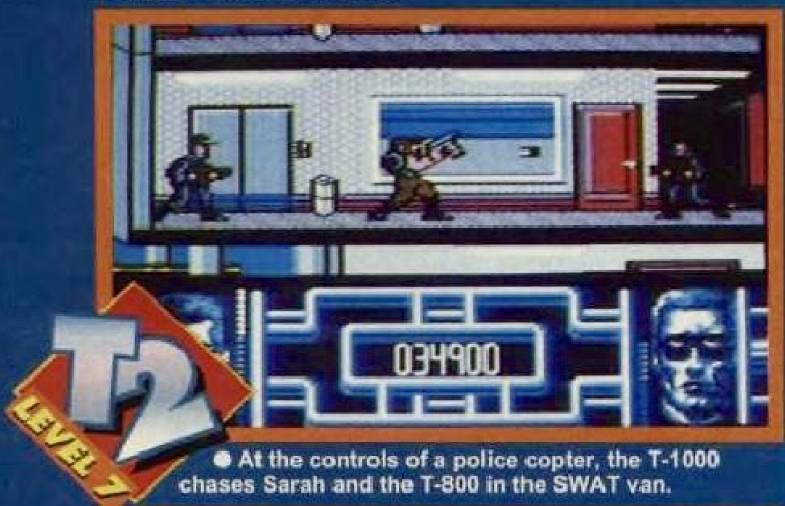
Level Eight has the team escaping from the labs in a SWAT van. This is much like Level Two, with a vertical scroll and numerous road obstacles. Again there are two energy levels, the T-800's decreasing with collisions and Sarah's with fire from the pursuing police copter. This time though, Sarah can fire back and a targeting cursor floats behind the van. The most sensible tactic is to just keep the cursor central while dodging the obstacles and hoping the helicopter keeps in range.

The chase ends with the chopper exploding, not that it worries the pilot — our friendly T-1000 who takes on the T-800 for one last time in **Level Nine**. Stripped to the metal both characters are impressive, while the steelworks background is nice. The T-1000 has improved in toughness and beating him will need good energy reserves. Succeed and you get a few more pics to reveal the movie's ending.

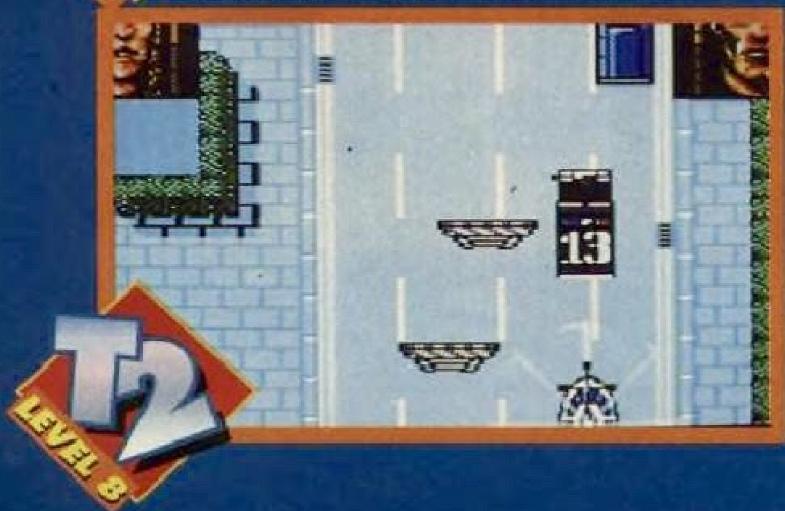
Most people will find completing *T2* difficult, but is it worthwhile? Well, there certainly isn't much in the way of originality, most of the levels show gaming rust spots — nor are they sensationally implemented, apart from the puzzle levels with the twitching fingers/face. It's also disappointing that the T-1000 never gets to show off its unique capabilities: if during one of the fight scenes one of its arms had transformed into a flashing blade that would've been great. But the programming team didn't see the film until relatively late, so maybe that's understandable. However, the levels are all well programmed, the graphics are good and gameplay enjoyable. Apart from the superb intro music and puzzle soundtrack, in-game sound is confined to a low, ominous semi-musical drone — much as in the film — with the reasonable sound effects on top.

T2 is certainly a big game, so much so the tape version will probably be a bit of a nightmare. Thankfully for non-disk users Ocean have belatedly decided to put the game on cart, which is great news and makes the game a great deal more fun. I played that version and the rapid access/brill presentation kept me coming back when lengthy tape access might have put me off for good. It's a shame that, as with *SCI*, a cart version wasn't planned from the start which perhaps could've included some shapeshifting graphics — but nevertheless this is one of the best carts we've seen. At £20 for 4 megabits this is an Arnie-size game which should be a big hit.





● Inside Cyberdyne labs, the T-800 battles SWAT cops with plenty of rapid-fire gunplay.



● At the controls of a police copter, the T-1000 chases Sarah and the T-800 in the SWAT van.

Credits

Game Design: Dementia
Programming: Bobby Earle
Graphics: Martin McDonald & Don McDermott
Sound: Jonathan Dunn

PRESENTATION 94%

Brilliant intro, choice of keys or joystick, plus intro/outro pics and text for each load. On cart this is a really good game, disk could be almost as impressive — but instant access is tough to beat. Tape will be frustrating though, even with reduced presentation.

GRAPHICS 84%

Apart from presentation, *T2* gets by on being professional and effective rather than stunning.

SOUND 86%

Great intro track, plus adrenalin-inducing puzzle music, otherwise a low insistent drone (as in movie) with decent FX.

HOOKABILITY 84%

Although none of the levels are in themselves brilliant, there's a strong compulsion to progress. You want to see the movie/game develop, plus there's satisfaction in winning through with more energy (plus high scores!).

LASTABILITY 88%

Nine levels provide a formidable challenge, on cart the size is a positive factor and you get a real kick banging it in, pushing yourself a bit further each time.

OVERALL 89%

A huge and professionally executed movie tie-in, rarely brilliant but always competent and benefiting massively from cartridge ease-of-play.

VINDICATORS

A revolution is in progress. Dissatisfied with being exploited by road users for the menial task of signalling a turn, these small orange lights have decided to fight against oppression. No more will they be misused by the young and foolish driver or not used at all by the doddering old fool. The time has come for the Vindicators to rise up and be fre... (*Er Andy, could I stop you there a moment? I think possibly you're confusing the words Vindicators and indicators – Ed*).

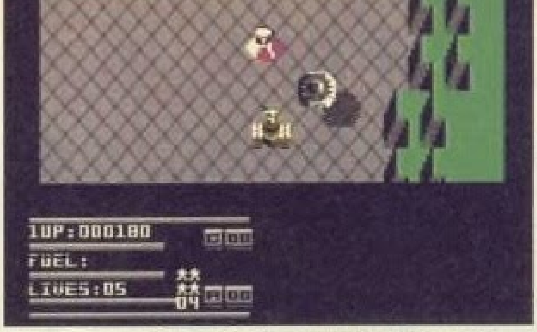
Yum Yum!
CONSOLE COMPATIBLE
CART GAME

If the truth be known, *Vindicators* is a futuristic shoot-em up. The year is 2525, the venue is galaxy number TR15, the mission is to defeat the evil Tangent Empire who, (Ho Hum) are trying to invade. So far so good. Now presumably I have to enlist all my armed forces to defeat the scoundrels. No?

Oh I see, so I take an elite force of maybe twenty or thirty troops trained in space combat. No? Ah, so what you're saying is it's me and a tank, fine.

From the confines of your heavily armoured tank, you set off to destroy the Tangent Empire's 14 space stations, starting with the weediest and working through increasingly tough fortifications. Console owners control their tanks with joystick only while the rest of you are faced with tackling the spacebar as well. Left and right rotates the tank while forward and back – shock horror – move you forwards and back. Pressing fire activates the laser cannon with which you are equipped at the start of the game. More potent firepower can be activated by pressing both fire buttons (or fire plus space on the normal C64).

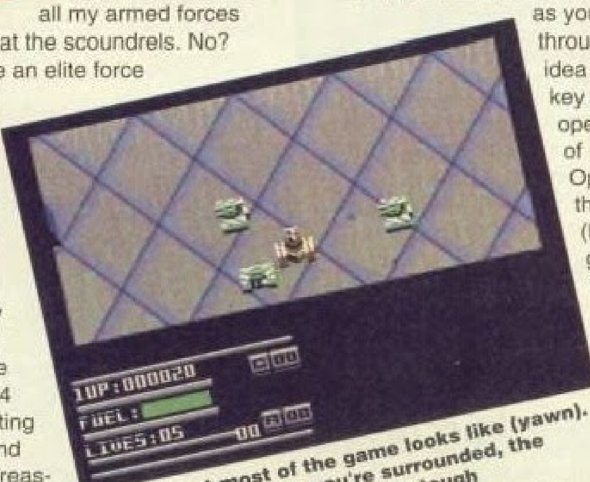
So, suitably tanked up it's off to the first level, then level two, followed closely by level three... and so on right up until level 14. Basically, there's not an awful lot of variety between levels.



A key you need in order to make it to the next level is hidden in an awkward corner from which you'll have to fight your way out

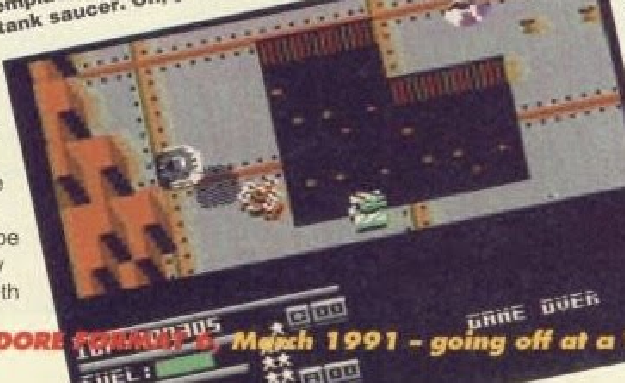
The space stations are viewed from overhead, each station being distinguishable by its floor pattern. Some levels have gaping chasms in the floor which reveal the 'timeless whirls of space' beyond. These pitfalls are harmless and serve only to restrict movement and look pretty. Walls perform the same task and provide simplistic maze formations which make your route through the space station more elaborate and consequently more difficult.

Each level scrolls from top to bottom as you move through it. The idea is to find the key and which opens the end of level exit. Opponents come in the form of tanks (like your own), gun turrets (stationary but deadly) and a flying brooch... Well it's not supposed to be a brooch but it does look uncannily like one of those tarnished monstrosities your great aunt used to wear. It's by far the most powerful opponent. Not only does it fly overhead firing volleys of laser shots but it avoids your return fire with ease.



This is what most of the game looks like (yawn). Despite the fact that you're surrounded, the opposition is neither smart nor tough

Space station floors are littered with objects; some good, some bad. Nominated for this year's Pretty Bad Object award is the land mine. In fact some space stations are almost nothing more than minefields with a bit of floor space thrown in for good measure. Falling into in the Good Object category are small, shimmering stars which are just begging to be picked up. They act like cash with which you can buy extra shields, speed, firepower and cannon bombs from the end of level shop.



Top right are two track-crippling mines and a gun emplacement. Left is another enemy defence – an anti-tank saucer. Oh, you can't fall through that hole...

Vindicators is an average game. There is a simultaneous two player option but this only marginally increases the fun. Occasional play may prove enjoyable but nothing more. The gameplay is a fairly accurate translation of the Tengen coin op, but the original was repetitive.

The graphics are adequate, but given that this is a cartridge game a lot more could have be done with it. The screens you get between levels aren't exciting enough to have you chomping at the bit. Sound effects are also competent. OK, Domark have been vindicated (*ungh – Ed*) but only just.

ANDY

Game	***Vindicators***
Publisher	***Domark***
Cartridge	***£19.95***

POWER RATING

THE DOWNERS...

- Gameplay too holds no thrill after the first few levels, it's all just more of the same
- Controls can at times be awkward and thus prove annoying
- Limited amount of opponents againcauses boredom to set in very quickly. Seen one and you've seen 'em all
- Ultimately not much of a challenge

100

55%

0

- **Two player option provides a more interesting game**
- **Faithful conversion will satisfy fans of the arcade machine**
- **Competently assembled**
- **Purchase of bonus items at the shop adds another facet saving the game from being below average**

...AND THE UPPERS

"Just get 'em out by the cartload!"

CARTLOADS OF JOY

With the C64's slot back in fashion, old games are beginning to re-appear with the new advantage of instantaneous trouble-free load. CF plugs in three of the latest bundles and finds that, at least in one case, swings and roundabouts are the order of the day

Cor! Luvverly, luvverly cartridges, they look good, they feel good. OK so they're ever so slightly more expensive but they're tons better than anything else, right? Well almost. Certainly, cart compilations are just scrummy – several hundred K of games available at the flick of a switch. Want some? We got 'em!

CONSOLE COMPATIBLE CART COMP

POWER PLAY

IN A CART 3

Microprose Soccer, Rick Dangerous, Stunt Car Racer

To start with, *CF* asks the question, who are the Disc Company? We'll continue on a strictly 'need to know' basis and quite frankly you don't need to know. Suffice to say that they produce all manner of computery things and have now started doing cartridge jobbies for the C64 and GS. Their first offering is a compilation called *Power Play* containing three games which made an enormous impact on their first release.

The first game on the cart' is *Microprose Soccer*. It's an arcade footie game (no bland management pap in this one) in which you can either take part in a World Tournament against the computer, or play against a friend – by far the most enjoyable option. The pitch is viewed from above but because it's so large only a small portion is visible at any one time. That's all right, though, because it scrolls ever so smoothly in eight directions.

Players are all computer controlled except the one that is flashing, which you guide around the pitch. If you need to use another chap, pressing fire swaps control. Playing against the computer is good fun but tends to be a little easy, so get a friend round and take full advantage of the game. The graphics are good enough to be fun, as are the sound and the playability.

Second is *Rick Dangerous*, and if you saw the review of *Rick Dangerous 2* back in *CF2* you'll know what to expect. It's a platform game in which you have to battle your way through an Amazonian scene, the Egyptian Pyramids and finally your enemy's fortress. Rick can fire bullets and drop time bombs which are invaluable for solving many of the intriguing puzzles in the game. Before *Rick 2* came out this was one of the best, if not the best, platform game available – fortunately it's only been pushed into second place by its sequel!

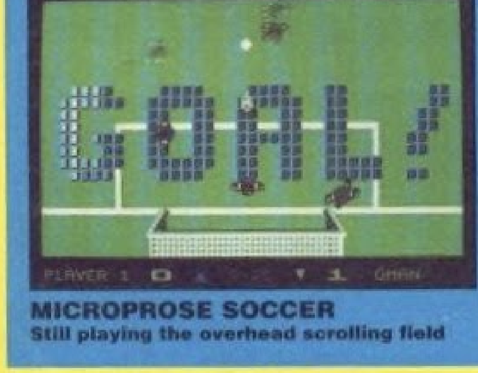
The final game on *Power Play* is *Stunt Car Racer*, a 3D race game of absolutely monumental proportions. The action takes place over eight tracks of varying difficulty. Each track is like a roller coaster in that it's raised high above the ground. The idea is to shoot around the course without falling off or wrecking the car and hopefully to end up in first place. There's only one opponent but this in no way detracts from the game. The feeling of hurtling through the air on the jumps is immense, and when you first play the game it can literally make your stomach flutter, it's that effective.

POWER PLAY

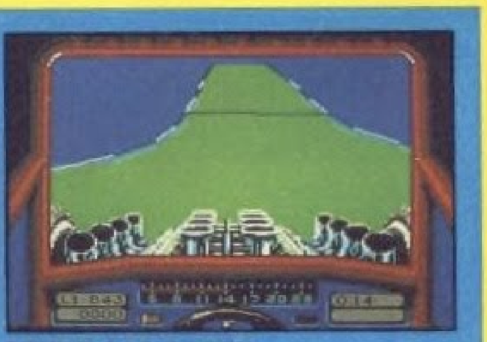
£24.95/THE DISC COMPANY

These three games add up to superb value. They're all brilliant and would be a good buy at forty quid. At £25 – and with that lovely instant access – they're practically being given away.

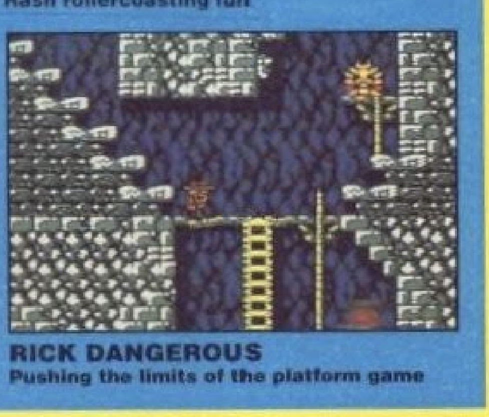
POWER RATING 96%



MICROPROSE SOCCER
Still playing the overhead scrolling field



STUNT CAR RACER
Rash rollercoasting fun



RICK DANGEROUS
Pushing the limits of the platform game

FUN PLAY

IN A CART 3

Pro Tennis Simulator, Pro Skateboard Simulator, Fast Food

The second cartridge based compilation is from... blimey would you credit it, The Disc Company. This one is called *Fun Play* and contains three less heavy-duty titles than its companion compilation, all ex-Code Masters budget games.

The first one is *Pro Tennis Simulator*, a neat little tennis game which doesn't quite come over as outstanding. It's viewed (as is usual with this sort of thing) at a 45 degree angle from behind one of the players.

An options screen allows you to choose the number of players, the number of games in a set and the difficulty level. To serve you merely have to press fire to throw the ball then fire again to send it hurtling into your opponent's half of the court. You then move your player around using the joystick and hit the ball by pressing fire. It's all dead simplistic but plays smoothly and is good for a bit of light relief from the more hectic or complex games that might adorn your library.

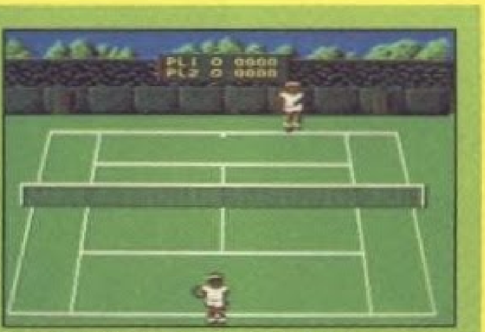
Next on the menu is *Fast Food*. RAAASSSP! Sorry guys but this one is utter crap. It's a *Pac Man* derivative that while looking prettier than Pac is far less rewarding to play. All you have to do is run (horribly slowly) around a small maze picking up various varieties of fast food. On later levels the monsters threaten to kill you but even this shot in the arm for the action isn't enough to make the game anything but appalling. Still, you can't win 'em all.

FUN PLAY

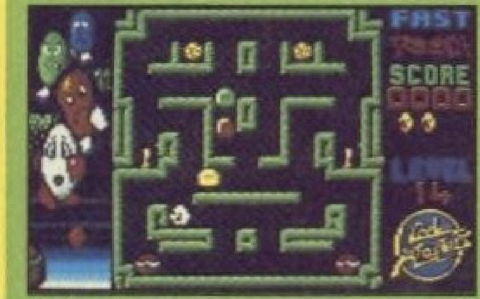
£24.95/THE DISC COMPANY

Considering the poor quality of one of these games, the £25 price tag and the fact that these were all previously budget titles I don't think this one can really be recommended unless, of course, you crave the efficiency of a cartridge.

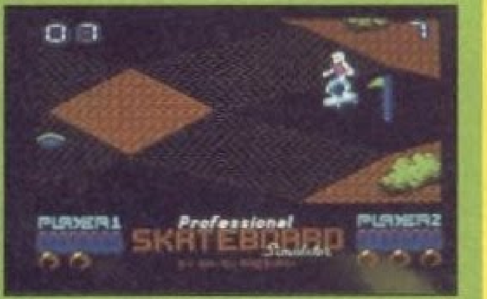
POWER RATING 55%



PRO TENNIS SIMULATOR
The all-weather court awaits your service



FAST FOOD
Make yourself as sick as a greaseburger



PRO SKATEBOARD SIMULATOR
Sun and fun – how it feels with wheels

Last and definitely not least is *Pro Skateboard Simulator*. This one is the jewel in this particular compilations crown (even if it is a rip-off of *720*!). You control a skate boarder who you must manoeuvre around a 3D course collecting flags. Tapping the joystick left and right rotates your character while pushing forwards on the stick sets you in motion. By pressing fire you can make your bloke perform incredibly acrobatic jumps which become vital in later levels where the course contains breaks. Too add to the excitement, the game is played against the clock.

COMMODORE JOYSTICK AND CARTRIDGE PACK

IN A CART 4

Fiendish Freddy's Big Top o' Fun, International Soccer, Flimbo's Quest, Klax

It's all very well if you buy a GS and get your free four-game cartridge but what if you want these splendid offerings and already own a C64? Well Commodore have kindly produced a bundle that contains the introductory cartridge and a console joystick all for £24.95. How does it shape up? Read on.

The first game on this package is *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun*. It's a sort of sports event game but set against a circus backdrop. This particular Big Top is in financial difficulty and the evil developer Freddy wants to build an office block on your plot of land. In order to save the circus you must perform each act to a high enough standard so that enough money is raised to keep the business going.

There are five events in all: the high dive, flying trapeze, human cannonball, knife throwing and juggling. Success in each event depends on how dextrous your joystick movements are. The difficulty of each level is increased by the Fiendish Freddy's meddling, often with hilarious results.

What puts this game above others of it's type is the superb animation in each of the acts. Even when you lose, it's fun to watch your trapeze artist plummet or your juggler explode as Freddy mischievously throws you a bomb instead of a ball. This game was almost unplayable in its multi-load cassette incarnation, but has improved beyond recognition by being placed on cart.

Oddly enough, the next offering was one of the first C64 cart games, from way back in '83! *International Soccer* is a fairly standard footie game with the pitch viewed side-on. You can set the difficulty level, play either against the computer or against a friend and you can even change the colour of your kit. Although it's getting a bit long in the tooth now it still holds up pretty well and provides a modicum of enjoyment as an occasional play.

Flimbo's Quest, the third game on this compilation, is a platform game in which you guide the unbearably cute Flimbo through an unbearably cute landscape, kill a number of unbearably cute monsters, collect the unbearably cute scrolls they drop and take them to the unbearably cute wizard. Then it's on to the next unbearably cute level. Okay so it's er… unbearably cute but it's playable and looks gorgeous (*so, you like the unebearable cuteness – Ed*).

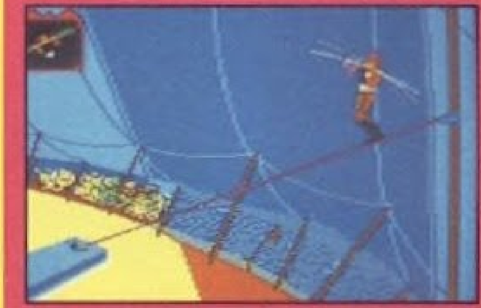
Finally there's *Klax*, a sort of cross between Connect 4 and *Tetris*, where you drop similarly coloured blocks in groups of three or more to remove them from the pile. The play area is drawn in such a way that it appears to come out of the screen at 45 degrees and along it the tiles tumble towards you, rather than drop from a height. *Klax*, as they say, is good but not that good. It's fast and colourful but doesn't really offer anything that you haven't already seen elsewhere.

COMMODORE JOYSTICK AND CARTRIDGE PACK

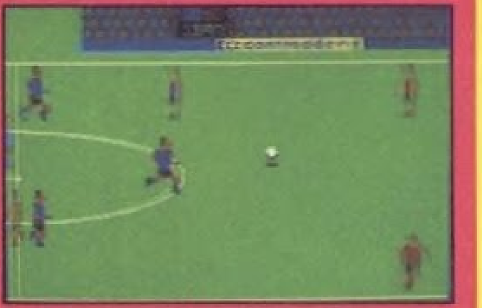
£24.95/COMMODORE

This compilation adds up to fairly good value. All four games are playable to a degree and overall the cart is a fine addition to your collection. In truth the joystick it's packaged with is... well... crap, so make your buying decisions based on the software not the hardware.

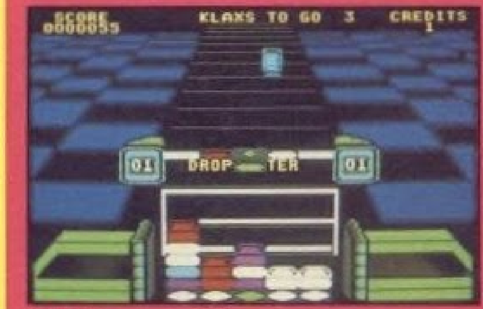
POWER RATING 75%



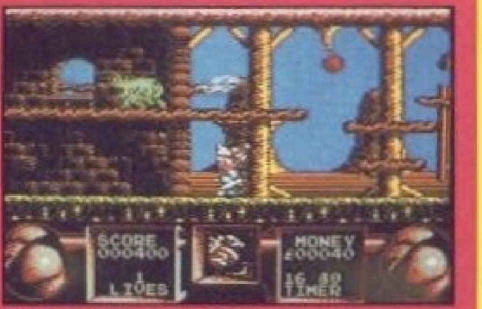
FF's BIG TOP OF FUN
Instant access – instant improvement



INTERNATIONAL SOCCER
Proving that old cartridge games never die

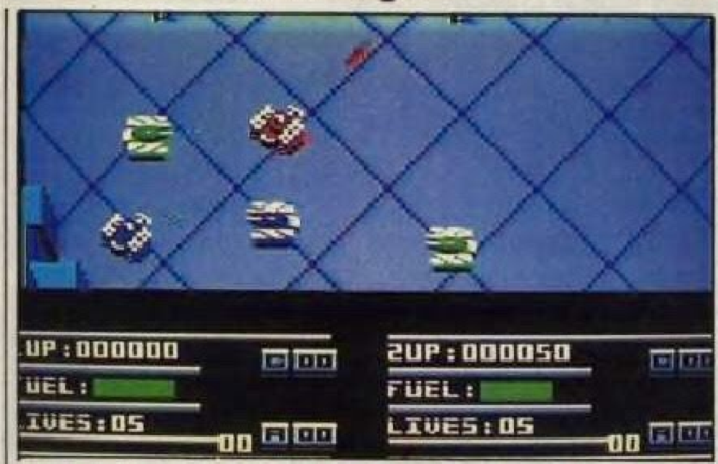


KLAX
For die-hard dexterity fiends everywhere



FLIMBO'S QUEST
Cuteness you'll come back to

● Domark, C64 £19.99 cartridge



VINDICATORS

The Imperial Tangent Empire has been up to no good yet again, 18 months after the 63% Amiga version the C64 resistance gets to flex its military muscle. Two SR-88 Strategic Battle Tanks are sent in with the objective of total destruction of each of the 14 Tangent space stations. The tanks cut a swathe through the multiple levels of each station, blasting tanks and static guns, collecting stars (for buying bonus hardware at the end of each level) and all the while searching for the key to the next level. Reach the final level of a station and the tanks have to collect as much bonus hardware as possible within the 20 seconds before the station self-destructs.

Seeing how old the game ideas are behind *Vindicators*, one wonders why anyone bothered to convert it. And at cartridge prices you at least expect top-notch presentation rather than the basic stuff on offer here. In-game, the variety in colours and backdrop patterns is all very well, but isn't matched by any kind of gameplay variety. After blowing up your hundredth tank and seventieth gun emplacement, excitement seems very far away. So despite looking good in places, with a cute main sprite and smooth multi-way scrolling, this tired concept fails to grip. A good conversion from Domark but sadly, not worth the wait.

Coin-op *Vindicators* boasted stunning sound FX, a weird control system and was quite fun for a couple of goes. But the C64 version, while adequately programmed with some attractive backdrops and sprites, can't match this coin-op glitz and must rely on gameplay which was never that addictive anyway. Trundling though countless overhead-view screens soon gets incredibly boring and while the simultaneous two-player mode is welcome, it can't save a game which feels so ancient.

PRESENTATION 65%
Good start-up screens but let down by mediocre options screens. Three skill levels and warp station screen.

GRAPHICS 60%
Varied pattern backdrops with some above-average tank graphics but severely lacking on the variety front.

SOUND 30%
Dull title tune with decidedly dated in-game FX to match.

HOOKABILITY 51%
Simple blasting fun proves easy enough to get into, but there's nothing new about it to keep you hooked.

LASTABILITY 31%
Very dated, repetitive gameplay doesn't get any more sophisticated on the later levels.

OVERALL 35%
Overpriced, lacking variety, depth and challenge.

Domark, C64 £19.99 cartridge only

CYBERBALL

American football has grown so violent that by 2022 only huge robots can play it! As in present-day gridiron, the offence try to advance the ball up the field with the eventual aim of scoring a touchdown. However, instead of having four chances to advance ten yards they have to reach the 'defuse line' before the ball explodes! The offence can choose to run, pass or use an option play (a mixture) — in any case four options are presented. Similarly the defence gets to choose from a variety of short, medium, and long defences.

On all plays, the quarterback first gets the ball before handing or passing it to a colleague to whom control switches. When passing, the quarterback has a choice of three targets to throw to. Field goals are not allowed, instead you must either run or pass the ball into the endzone from a goal-line position.

Cyberball is surprisingly easy to get into with attractive graphics and excellent status/play select screens. Plays last mere seconds but gameplay is as rewarding as any other American Football program, a 200-yard running play for a touchdown is always terrific. Good to see the many plays implemented as well, pity there isn't a player vs player option though and what happened to the Turbo Boost feature? Otherwise, playable American Football fun well worth a look.

Eight months after the 72% Amiga version we have the C64 game, looking very nice with attractive sprites, slick scrolling and good presentation screens. Actual gameplay should appeal to most American football fans, with lots of plays to master. Non-fans might find the game a little bitty — you seem to spend most of your time picking plays which take mere seconds to collapse into failure. Successful plays make it worthwhile though, and with practise you can improve — especially on the tricking passing throws. This is a top-notch conversion, even if little advantage is taken of the cart.

PRESENTATION 82%
Simultaneous two-player mode (both on the same team), attractive play diagram screens and choice of six teams to control and play against.

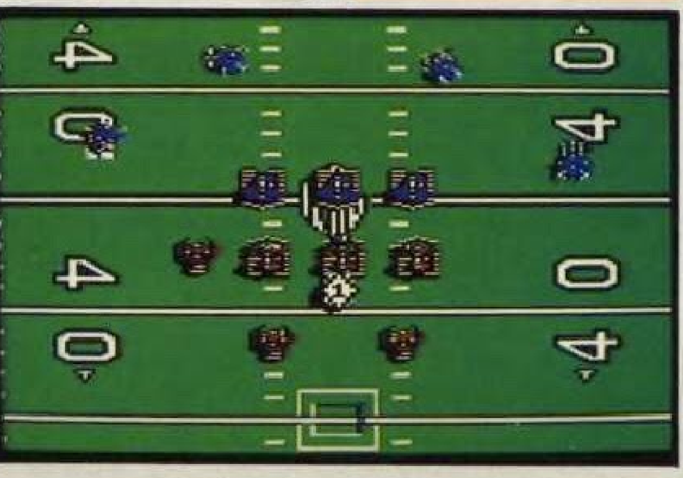
GRAPHICS 78%
Smooth scrolling and attractive sprites which move quite well.

SOUND 77%
Nice title tune, in-game there's basic spot FX.

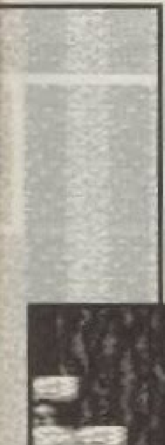
HOOKABILITY 79%
Surprisingly easy to get into, at least if you concentrate on running rather than tricky throws.

LASTABILITY 75%
Each game will take about twenty minutes, and defeating all the opposing teams is a fair challenge.

OVERALL 78%
A superslick conversion.



ERPLAY



more than makes up in graphics and playability. Far better than Kick Off or its sequel.

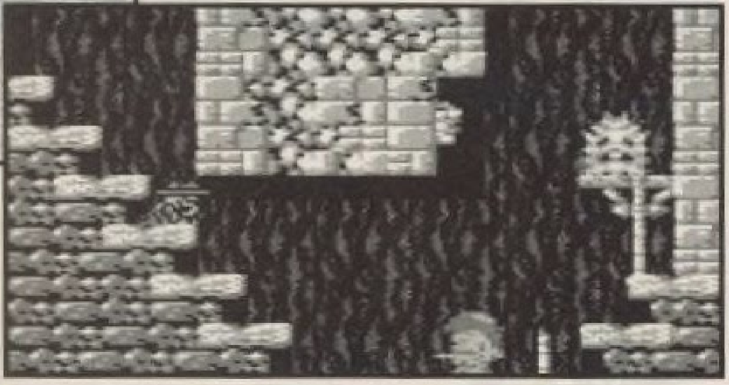
Power Play is a pack just oozing with the cream off the top of the best games of all time pile. Any C64GS owner would be completely doolally to miss this.

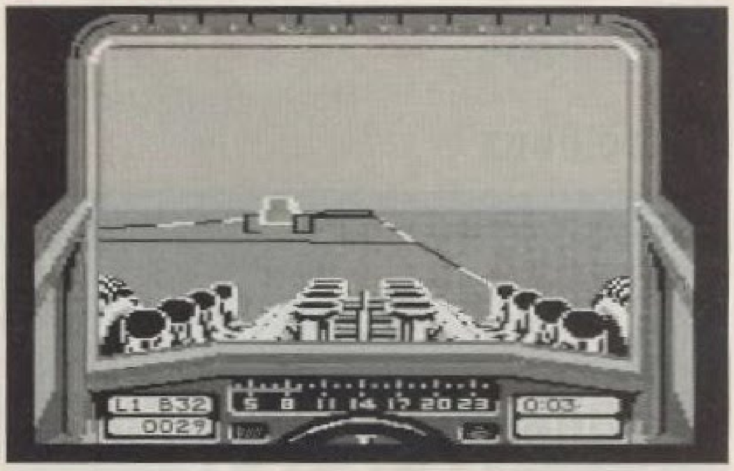
CREDIT CARD

Name: Power Play
Supplier: The Disc Company
Price: £19.99

OVERALL: 96%

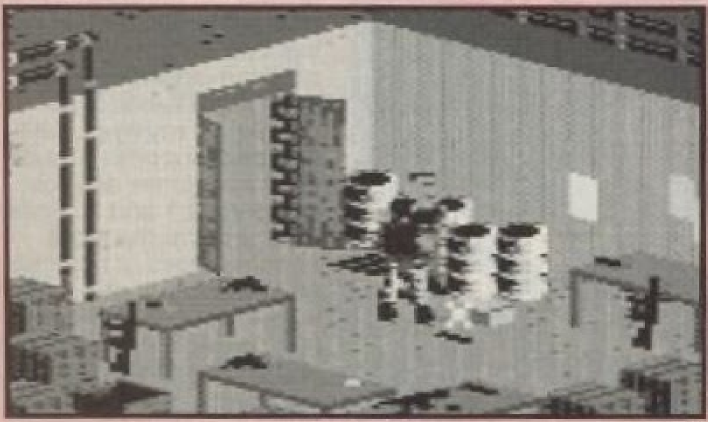
Every game on this cart is superb, you'd really love to insert it in your slot and no mistake.





VENDETTA

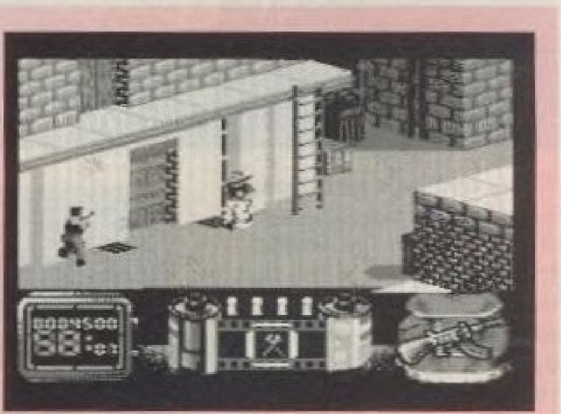
Another System 3 success story makes it to the C64GS, and thanks to the release of the truly stunning Last Ninja 3 and Ninja Remix on cart, those fans will undoubtedly find a whole new challenge in this gun toting meaty package.



Using the same system as the Ninja series, Vendetta could hardly fail to impress. That said it has many features of its own to more than impress.

You are a grunt (a soldier not a whiffy fart) who has had no problems in getting out of Vietnam. But now that you have finally been accepted into the society a scientist friend and his daughter have been kidnapped by terrorists and this makes you mighty sore. So armed with but a bread knife you decide that you should go after the assailants and remove their most private parts.

But the 3D arcade adventure part is not the be all and end all of Vendetta, nope we even get treated to a rather splendid driving game that links the levels. And on cartridge (I know I've said it before) there is no wait between sections.



I reviewed when it was out on cassette and gave it 94%, and it has weathered the time (almost a year) very well indeed. The graphics, sonics and play have only since been bettered (in my view) by a select few games and surely a console owner would rather have a game that would last for yonks than a quick licenced flash in the pan.

CREDIT CARD

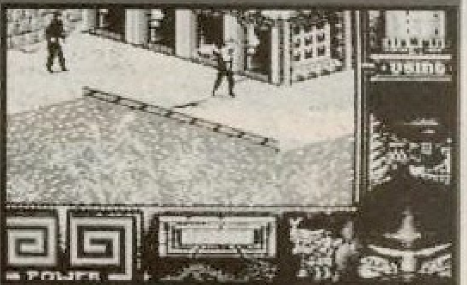
Name: Vendetta
Supplier: System 3
Price: £24.99

OVERALL: 94%

An excellent game that's full to the brim with different styles of gameplay and ideas.

Another rerelease that's almost near completion is Rick Dangerous 2 (a game that was YC Fun Oned not too long ago). It's being converted onto cartridge by Vivid Image at this very moment (as we go to press), so you'll be able to get your teeth into the platform game lickity split. The biggest question at the moment though is, will the Turtles make it onto cartridge? And the answer is, we haven't got a clue. Oh well Turtle fans, maybe we'll find out next issue.

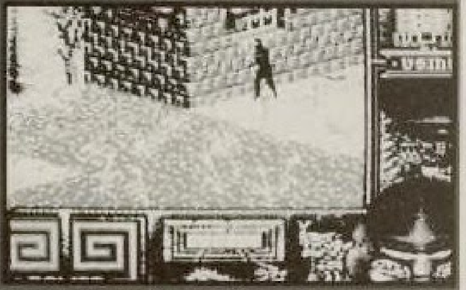
LAST NINJA 3



If you want the main gist of what this game is all about, you'd do better to skip along to the main review elsewhere in the mag and read it, I'll wait here. Tum, te, tum... La, la, la... Right? Got it?

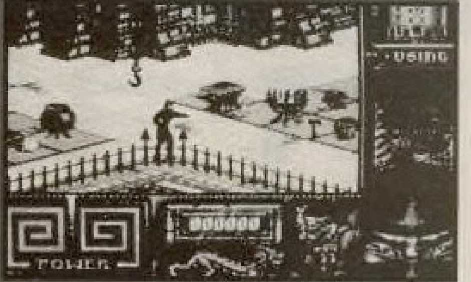
Good now I'll just update you on how even more stiffy the game is on cartridge.

It's identical as its cassette and disk counterparts but for the fact that it loads in one nanosecond (probably, unfortunately my Daley Thompson stopwatch is only accurate to one tenth of a second, and blew up when I tried to stop it any quicker), and all the corresponding levels are also available to hand pronto. Other than that you're looking at a carbon copy in terms of graphics, presentation and sound. And if you expect the gameplay to better at all I just ask you this - how can you better the best?



There's so much going on though that the game has to be crammed onto a 4 meg cartridge (in preference to the 2 meg ones that just about everybody else uses) and as such pushes the price up a bit. Therefore most of you out there will find that you have to save up loads of cash just to get it, and those who just own a normal C64 might do better to get the disk or cassette version. You C64GS owners though will have to make your minds up, but I'll tell you that this game is the cats goolies and no mistake.

Rik



CREDIT CARD

Name: Last Ninja 3
Supplier: System 3
Price: £24.99

OVERALL: 97%

The price just alters the mark to lower than its tape and disk counterparts.

CREDIT CARD

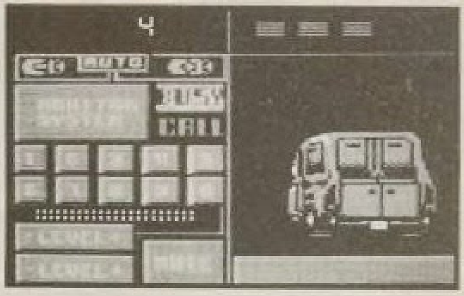
Name: S.C.I. (Chase HQ 2)
Supplier: Ocean
Price: £19.99

OVERALL: 79%

A vast improvement over the first game, but the controls are too hard and fiddly.

S.C.I.

(CHASE HQ 2)



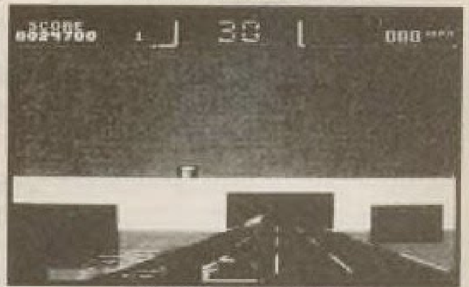
So here it is (Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun) the sequel to the game that promised oh so much and was a rather floppy sausage when it all came down to it.

But will this meaty comestible be a lovely fried meal or yet more dog food?

It's neither really, which is a shame because in the arcade it was so good that I wet my pants when it first came out. The thrill of the chase and the sheer violence of the gun fight added together to make any budding Mary Whitehouse trade in her knitting bag and adopt leathers and a Magnum .45. You see, after the original few missions, the force has given you a gun to use during the chase as well as a beefed up car that'll take a good amount of bashing (an infinite amount to be honest).

Like the original you have to speed along the American highways and catch up with some 'orrible villain or other, when you do you must do your best to make their vehicle unroadworthy so that they must pull over. To do this you can bash them with your car (as per the first game) or you can blast the frag out of them with different kinds of weaponry (a pistol first followed by munchier gear that drops from a helicopter for you to catch).

That's about it for the gameplay, and its only varied by the layout of the roads and the hazards that lay about. The problem with the game is certainly not the graphics or muzak (they're both superb), no it's the difficulty in controlling your car. It's murder going around corners, and when you're trying to shoot a volley of bullets at



Feature Articles

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SIXTY FOUR GAMES IN ONE S

The C64 Games Console is ready to roll. For £99.99 it seems like a bargain, but what will difference will it make to the games we play? We talk to Mark Cale, head of System 3 and find he's a fan.

"System 3 have continued to push forward the boundries of the Commodore 64 since it's conception in 1983. With classic games like International Karate, Last Ninja 1 & 2 and IK+ gaining international acclaim and sweeping numerous awards, System 3 set the standard for 64 games.

"Having continued in this vein over the past year with such shash hits as Tusker and Vendetta, the superb Myth and the totally addictive Flimbo's Quest, the company has further enhanced its reputation as the leading original-product software house.

So why, when lots of companies are deserting the 64 is System 3 producing more product than ever?

"The 64 has continued to surprise the industry with its longevity. An excellent marketing campaign by the American company has breathed new life into a market where the 8-bit machines is supposedly dead. The 64 GS console goes further to support that fact. The 8-bit Commodore market is alive and kicking.

"Such is System 3's commitment to the 64 that we're doing something special for the new owners of this machine who weren't around when The Last Ninja 2 was sweeping the market. The game has been remixed and relaunched onto the market as the greatly enhanced Ninja Remix. Having closely analysed the market for the past 18 months, System 3 now feels it is capable of

Commodore
Commodore
C64
GAMES SYSTEM
INSTANT FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY
NEW

ECOND!

producing 64 product comparable with console games.

So what new features does the Remix offer?

"Remix now has an exciting and technically brilliant intro sequence, the likes of which were only previously seen on console systems. State of the art animation techniques and even greater graphic content provide the new C64 owner with a whole new concept and with a redesigned status area.

(There are new sound effects too, and music through each of the seven levels. Remix should be in the shops now)

"Inevitably with such a strong back catalogue, the company is producing versions of Myth and Vendetta to appear alongside Remix on the console. They'll all be available before Christmas. "Flimbo's Quest" is included in the C64GS pack and the eagerly awaited Ninja 3 will be launched on the console for Christmas too.

Who Else?

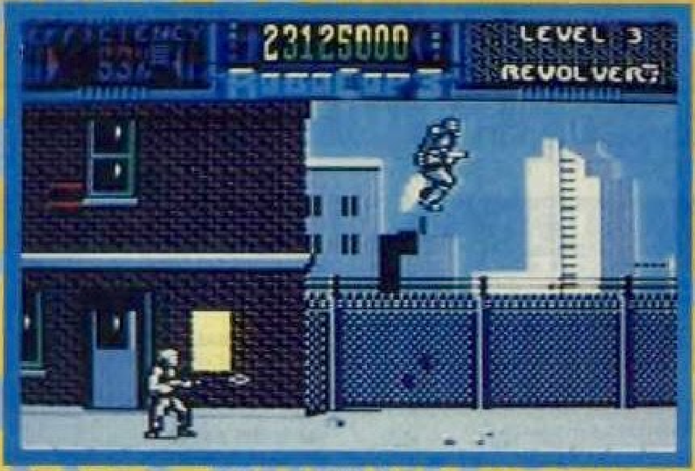
All the major software companies producing 64 product at the moment seem to be committed to producing cartridge games. Domark, Ocean, US Gold and - of course - System 3 have a hefty catalogue of forthcoming attractions.

The Cartridge

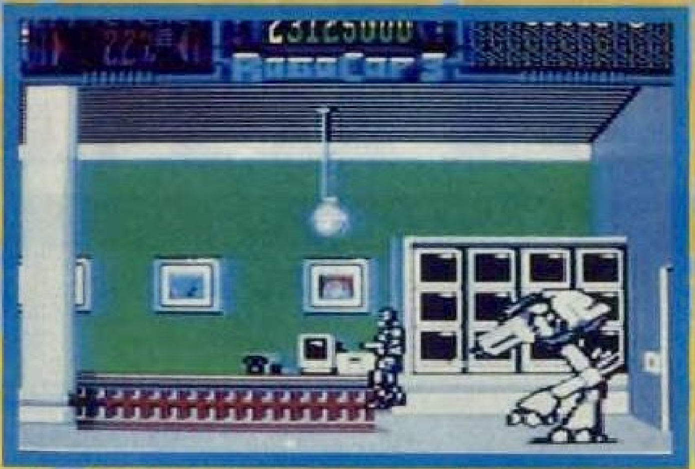
Cartridges have two main advantages over tape or disc systems. Storage capacity and speed. Being able to access vast areas of memory instantly allows games designers to be creative beyond the confines of the 64k machine.

Sub games wildly different from the main storyline can be inserted and accessed at any point during play.

You don't even have to wait for a disk to load. All 64 console software is instantly playable through all levels. So you can forget having to twiddle your thumbs for six minutes while the next level of aliens is ported in from tape. You can carry on with the action immediately.



● Level Three and Robo gets his jetpack out for some toy company-friendly merchandising promotion.



● Level 5 with robotic ninjas and superb ED209s. In *III* the ED209s' animation rivals the original coin-op.

CARTRIDGE

Although the GS is officially dead, and few other software houses are bothering with carts, Ocean are pressing ahead with some stunning new cartridge projects. *Battle Command* is undoubtedly the most ambitious cartridge game yet, but *RoboCop III* will be no less eagerly awaited. STUART WYNNE visited the Mancunian software giants to glimpse two of the year's most eagerly awaited games.

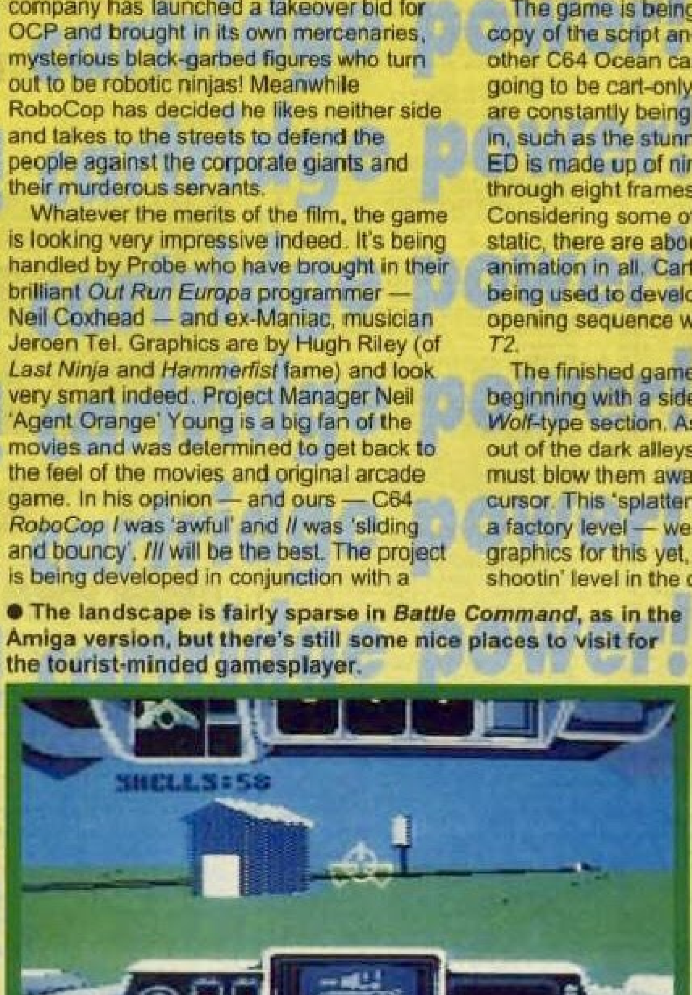
Despite the appalling *RoboCop II* movie, Orion pictures have pressed ahead with a third film, this time squarely aimed at the mass-market with lots of gizmos for toys and other money-spinning merchandising. After *II*'s 'RoboCop looking very silly on a bike' scene, we now have a somewhat more realistic RoboCop-with-jetpack action figure accessory. The script is once again by comics genius Frank Miller (of *Dark Knight Returns* fame), whose *II* script was apparently mutilated in the finished film. His new storyline features OCP suffering severe financial problems, with a mad plan to eliminate the poor, called rehabs, with mercenaries. At the same time a Japanese company has launched a takeover bid for OCP and brought in its own mercenaries, mysterious black-garbed figures who turn out to be robotic ninjas! Meanwhile RoboCop has decided he likes neither side and takes to the streets to defend the people against the corporate giants and their murderous servants.

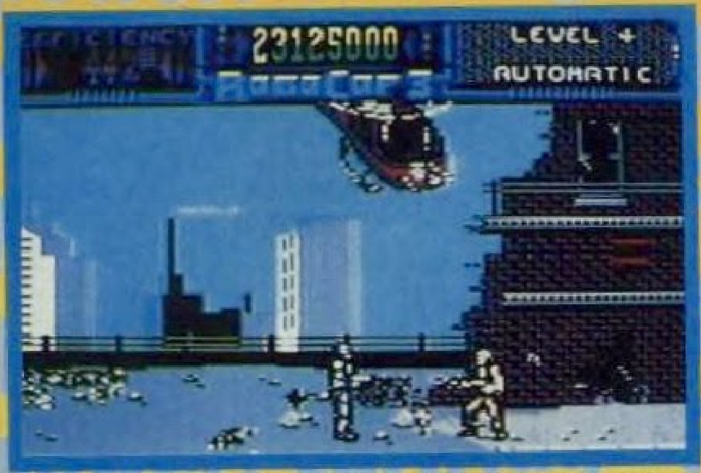
Whatever the merits of the film, the game is looking very impressive indeed. It's being handled by Probe who have brought in their brilliant *Out Run Europa* programmer — Neil Coxhead — and ex-Maniac, musician Jeroen Tel. Graphics are by Hugh Riley (of *Last Ninja* and *Hammerfist* fame) and look very smart indeed. Project Manager Neil 'Agent Orange' Young is a big fan of the movies and was determined to get back to the feel of the movies and original arcade game. In his opinion — and ours — C64 *RoboCop I* was 'awful' and *II* was 'sliding and bouncy'. *III* will be the best. The project is being developed in conjunction with a Nintendo game, but the C64 game will have less jumping action.

The game is being developed from a copy of the script and various slides. Unlike other C64 Ocean carts, *III* was always going to be cart-only and the ROM chips are constantly being accessed to pull data in, such as the stunning ED-209 graphic. ED is made up of nine sprites going through eight frames of animation overall. Considering some of the sprites remain static, there are about 50 frames of animation in all. Cartridge power is also being used to develop a brilliantly cinematic opening sequence which could well beat *T2*.

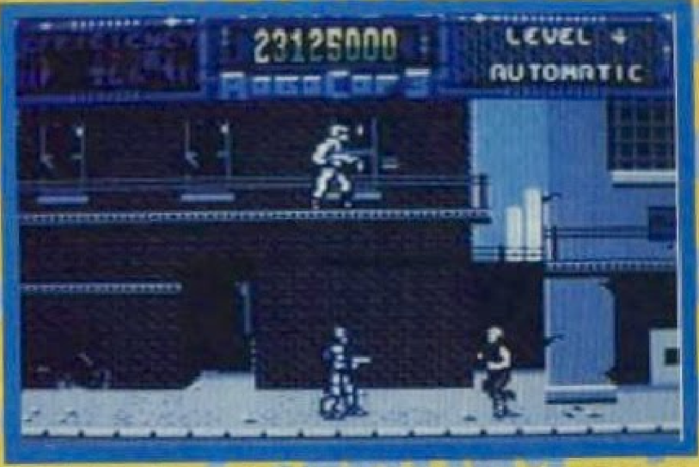
The finished game will have five levels, beginning with a sideways scrolling *Op Wolf*-type section. As villains come looming out of the dark alleys in the moonlit city, you must blow them away with a red targeting cursor. This 'splatterpunk' level leads onto a factory level — we haven't seen the graphics for this yet, but it's a walkin'-'n'-shootin' level in the classic RoboCop style. To gain inspiration Neil went down to the arcades to play the old game, watching how the various villains are triggered into action. The next two levels take place in Cadillac Heights, the first time around RoboCop is jetpack-propelled, then it's back on foot — watch out for an attack helicopter, and ED-209 at the end of the level. The final level is a confrontation in OCP tower: as you complete a floor of the tower you enter a

● The landscape is fairly sparse in *Battle Command*, as in the Amiga version, but there's still some nice places to visit for the tourist-minded gamesplayer.





● **An enemy chopper comes roaring in at the start of Level Four.**



● ***RoboCop III* is an original design by Probe which goes back to the style of the original coin-op.**

POWER!

lift, and the screen scrolls up to the next level. Enemies include more ED-209s and robotic ninjas.

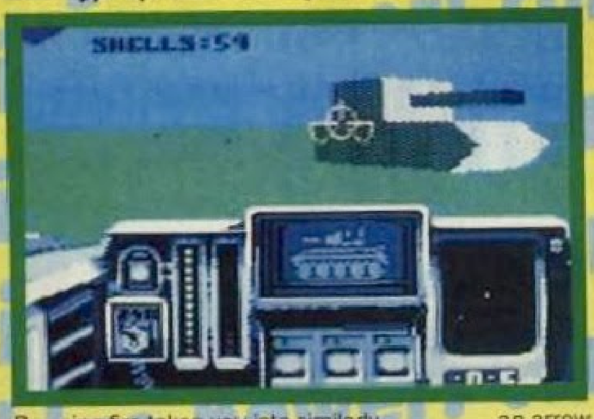
For once there are no puzzle subgames; this time around Robo's energy is restored by collecting powercells during the levels. Then at the end of the level you go into a repair screen where you can recharge Robo's batteries to 100% — hopefully — if you only recharge up to say 75%, then that is the maximum power rating you can recharge up to for the rest of the game!

After a bug-ridden *Robo I*, and amusing *Robo II*, *III* looks as if it will finally give C64 owners a superb game in the genuine RoboCop style. This £19.99 two-meg cart will be out winter time, and should extend Probe's C64 winning streak even further.

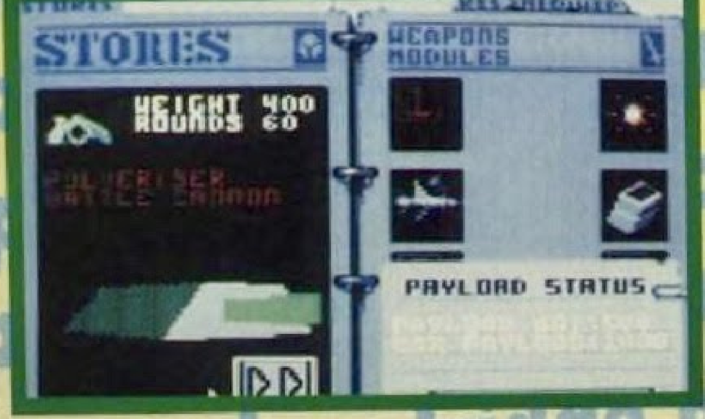
COMMANDING HEIGHTS

It's been over eight months since the Sizzling 16-bit original, but C64 *Battle Command* is finally nearing completion after over a year's development and only playtesting tweaks are needed now. On slamming the cart in you're greeted with a title pic just as good as the Amiga's, while the music seems even better, truly superb!

● **A nicely shaped tank which moves at *Battle Zone*-type speeds — ie very fast!**



● **The weapons selection screen with lots and lots of techie wizardry to choose from. Here you see the gun turret which rotates in full 3-D.**

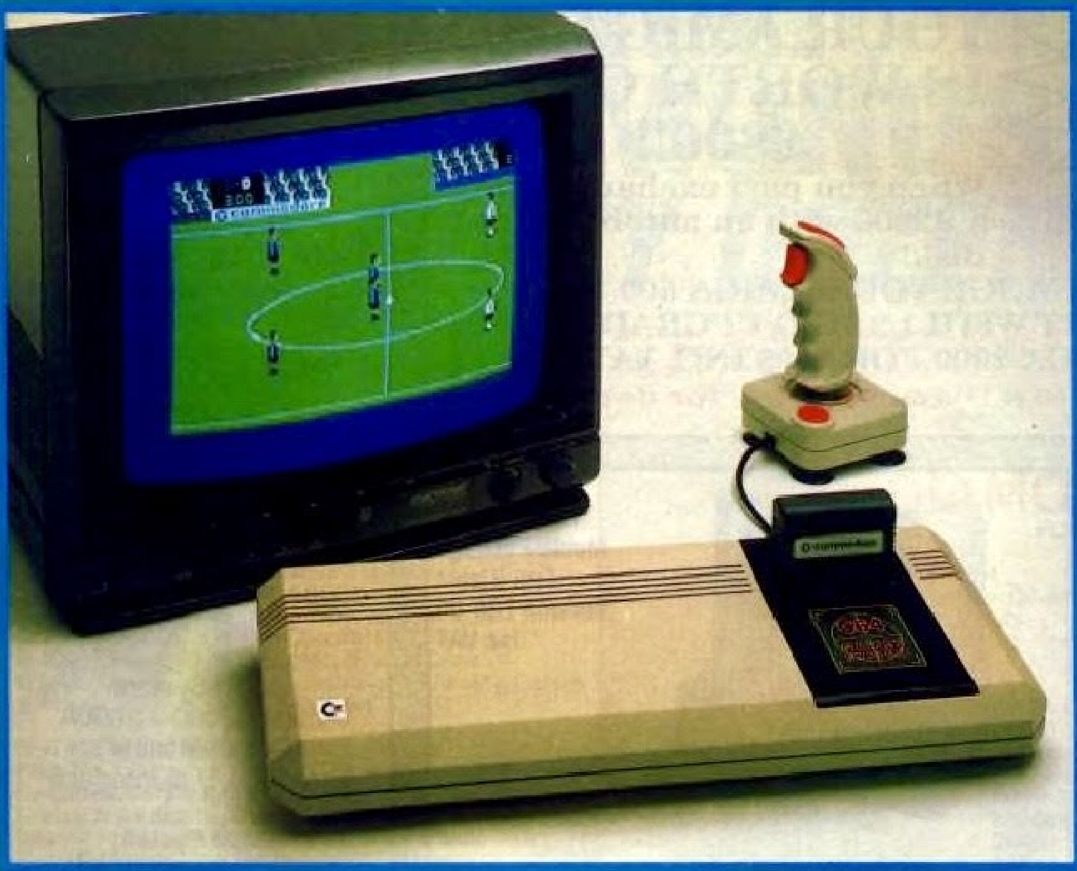


Pressing fire takes you into similarly impressive briefing and arming-up screens. Each of the weapons you can choose from is shown in full 3-D, rotating before you, and there's lots and lots of them. A Pulveriser main gun, infra-red and radar-guided missiles, Time Bombs, decoys and lots more give you plenty to think about with just four weapons slots.

You must arm your tank for specific missions, which range from simplistic blast-'em-ups to rescuing hostages to destroying fuel depots. After achieving your objectives you have to reach a pick-up point. But what of combat itself? Well, it's certainly not *Driller* — programmer Steve Caslin has worked miracles and the speed is comparable to the Amiga. Tanks initially look disappointing, simple blocks with holes as they approach head-on. But then they turn and you see a proper tank silhouette in full 3-D whizzing past... it's stunning, even more impressive than *Space Rogue* in some ways. There's also some nice buildings in there, look-out posts and suchlike, but as with the 16-bit original a lot of the time you're under attack from vehicles hiding behind you or so far away they only appear as dots. This can be irritating, especially if you haven't got a SLAM defensive laser fitted, but you have to learn to adapt.

The game is designed for the GS joystick, the normal fire button fires the currently selected weapon while left/right change direction and forward/back accelerates/decelerates the tank — with reverse as an option. Pressing the second fire button (or spacebar) brings up an arrow which can then be whizzed about the high-quality control panel to select a monochromatic night sight, change selected weapon and increase/decrease mainscreen magnification! You can also call up menu screens to display tank damage, a mission map and so on — these are all mini-loads and would be impossible on tape, even the planned disk version could be tricky, but for cart it's great. As for save/loading, there's a special code system.

Inevitably some things from the 16-bit game are missing. There's no drop-off helicopter or attack aircraft, but from a brief playing session it appears the core of the game remains intact, while the 3-D system is as fast as you could want. *Battle Command* combines *Battle Zone* arcade action with complex missions and sophisticated weaponry. If Ocean get the playability right this could be the breakthrough game on cartridge.



INSIDE THE FUTURE:

THE C64GS

This month sees rumours turned into reality, with the C64GS console appearing in the plastic at the UK CES show. The machine is set to completely revolutionize the C64 market with numerous software houses developing cartridge software. STUART WYNNE explains why Commodore could have a winner.

From its launch in 1982, the basic C64 has soldiered on as the definitive 8-bit Commodore. While both the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC have enjoyed development as 128K, disk-based machines the ambitious, but expensive C128 never caught on. It was never really hyped, since soon after its launch Commodore acquired the Amiga. Yet while the 16-bit machine's success can't be doubted, its £400 price tag makes it unlikely ever to sell in the huge numbers the Speccy and C64 have. What is selling are consoles — cheap, extremely easy to use and with no piracy problems.

Step right back into the limelight the C64, the bestselling 8-bit computer in the world with a superlative specification. After years of neglect, broken only by periodic repackaging with new games, the C64 has finally returned to the spearhead of Commodore's marketing. While the standard C64 and C2N will still be sold, there's the new keyboardless model — the C64GS. Priced at just £99.99 the console will be packaged with a joystick and a cartridge containing *International Soccer*, *Klax*, *Flimbo's Quest* and *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O'Fun*.

PHYSICAL: Six months after we first reported the console rumours, the C64GS turns out to be a rather unremarkable-looking piece of hardware: a cream lozenge distinguished only by ventilation slits at the rear and a black strip across the cartridge slot including a day-glo 'C64 Games System' logo.

Apart from the cartridge slot being on top, the arrangement of ports is very familiar. Just as on the C64, at the rear of the machine there's a composite video output for monitors and a standard RF output for TVs. On the right side there's the two joystick ports, power input and on/off switch. There obviously aren't any datasette or disk drive ports, but apart from some minor ROM changes the circuitboard inside is the familiar C64 set-up.

The supplied cartridge has a four megabit (512K) memory — the same as an Amiga. The size of future cartridges will vary according to the needs of the game. Ocean expect to be able to compress most of their 180k multiloads onto one megabit carts (128k).

All the cartridges will be compatible with existing C64s and C128s (both of which have cartridge ports). Whether those ancient cartridges first released for the C64 will be compatible with the console is less likely, as many required key input.

PERFORMANCE

The console has identical graphic and sonic capabilities to the C64: the same super-smooth scrolling, blended colours and impressive sprite-handling abilites accompanied by one of the most sophisticated sound chips around. The custom video and sound chips, VIC II and SID respectively, make possible some very impressive games. Just look at *Turrican*! Multiload games such as *Turbo Out Run*, *The Untouchables* and so on will be much more user-friendly on cartridge. Programmers can also duplicate memory intensive coin-op intro sequences without irksome loading delays, but the potential of cartridges is much more than that!

The ability to rapidly snatch data from cartridge breaks memory restrictions. On the C64 conversion of *Golden Axe* a creature had to be cut because it meant loading in too much data for a single load. On cartridge the graphics can be incredibly detailed and levels vast, with fresh data being loaded in all the time. Already several software houses are developing cartridge-only games.

GAMEPLAY GENIUS

According to Commodore 'it has commitment from major software houses to release up to 100 new cartridges before Christmas'. Of course, the key phrase is 'up to' but there's undoubtedly plenty of interest. The anti-piracy potential is as exciting to software houses as the capacity for expanded games. Another factor is the likely price tag — £24.95. Although this may vary with software houses, cartridge production costs and the maths of distribution, mean £25 is likely to be the average. Obviously if software houses want to sell to C64/128 owners as well as console owners, the cartridge games must use the expanded performance capabilities. For console owners the price is below average compared to Nintendo and Sega products, and Commodore will allow anyone to write for the GS — for a small royalty — which should encourage development.

In any case, **Ocean**'s participation is obviously critical to the success of almost any new games system in the UK. They're not only the biggest and most successful software house in Britain, but also very closely associated with Commodore via various gamespácks for both Amiga and C64. They're already planning four releases: *Batman*:

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★ ***The Lost Ninja I & II may appear on cartridge, rewritten as the Ninja Remix.***

The Movie, *Operation Thunderbolt* and *Shadow Of The Beast*. The latter has yet to be released on tape or disk, but is a very nice looking conversion of the Amiga graphical showcase.

Ocean's Software Development Manager **Gary Bracey** was very enthusiastic about the console which he obviously expects to succeed. It seems likely games will, or already are being developed for cartridge only. Games for tape or disk may be expanded, some digitized movie stills could be used for presentation. The excellent interlevel screens on the disk version of *Untouchables* are an example of what could be done. Both *SCI* and *RoboCop II* seem likely to be released on cartridge.

Also heavily involved is **Mindscape**, the American company which specialises in disk-intensive and very complex games, ranging from the huge Origin RPGs to the Gold Medal-winning *Space Rogue* to the slapstick-packed *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun*. Mindscape are particularly excited by the potential to put many previously disk-only products on cartridge. After all with the majority of UK C64 owners only having a datasette, the market for their games will be dramatically increased. Their games are also sophisticated enough to justify the high price tag, particularly with plenty of high quality packaging. They were involved in developing the cart which comes with the console, and already have a game under development for cartridge only.

System 3 haven't gone that far yet, but following on from *Flimbo's Quest* they foresee making all future games available on cartridge. They also foresee doing compilations and possibly even going cartridge only! **Sales Curve** are no less enthusiastic, and consider it 'very, very likely we'll be releasing new stuff on cartridge'. Again cartridge-only games are being considered. **Palace** see plenty of life left in the C64 all round and are currently discussing whether to put *International 3D Tennis* on cartridge. *Barbarian III*, due sometime in 1991, is also a possibility. **Hewson** have yet to make a firm decision, although the prospects of releasing their glittering back catalogue on cartridge compilations is certainly under consideration. **Thalamus** are considering putting their 'greatest hits' compilation on cartridge.

One software house which would appear a natural for cartridge releases is **MicroProse**, which has a large range of first class disk-intensive C64 classics. Unfortunately they're currently concentrating on developing their coin-op system and are adopting a wait-and-see attitude to the cartridge market. **Mirrorsoft** are 'always very interested in new developments' and will be following the progress of the console.

While the '100 cartridges before Xmas' prediction seems optimistic, software support is clearly strong with many software houses developing cartridges and everyone very interested.

PROSPECTS

The GS is being launched into a crowded market. At approximately the same price tag there's the Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Master System, both £80 in their most basic form. The C64 can beat most NES games for both graphics and particularly sound. However, Nintendo is producing expanded cartridges such as *Track & Field* which approach 16-bit quality for £30-£40. Superior marketing has made the Sega Master System the most popular UK console so far, although most games are graphically and sonically inferior to the NES's. The Sega does have some 16-bit like static screens, but is already being overshadowed by the UK launch of Sega's 16-bit Megadrive console. *Golden Axe* on Megadrive beats the coin-op! — for a price. The Megadrive is £189.99, and the few games available start at £30. Probably even more impressive is Nintendo's Super Famicom, which is due to be launched in Japan soon but is unlikely to reach the UK for years.

Another new console is the CPC-based Amstrad GX4000. Like the GS it's being launched at the UK CES for £99. It comes with two Japanese-style control pads and a free cartridge of *Burning Rubber* — written by Ocean in the mould of *WEC Le Mans*. Speed and graphics are up to 16-bit standards, but by comparison sound is mediocre and the CPU is still the old Z80. Ocean are supporting the GX4000 with conversions, but whether it will earn a massive software base is still open to question.

Nevertheless the competition is such that already trade newspaper CTW have reported Commodore may reduce the price, although Commodore's **Andrew Ball** dismissed this as 'pure speculation, we have no intention of getting into any price wars.' Commodore plan a big ad campaign to push the machine before Xmas.

What is certain is that the GS will revitalise the entire C64/128 market. Cartridges offer considerable benefits in both anti-piracy and performance. Software houses which might otherwise have stopped writing for the C64 are now thinking of developing games especially written for the cartridge. While in the past C64 cartridges were overtaken by cheaper tape and disk, nowadays most games require so much multiloading cartridges have a big advantage. Also programmers know enough to make cartridge-only games very special indeed. **Mark (*Turbo Out Run*) Kelly** has already floated the concept of a racing game construction kit based on the *Turbo* code!

For the future, Ocean's Gary Bracey foresees the market splitting into two camps — CD-ROM-based 16-bit computers for the older end of the market, and cartridge-based consoles at the younger. Cumbersome and sluggish tape would become obsolete, except possibly for budget, as might disks. This will mean more expensive games, but hopefully through discounts in magazines like ZZAP! the effective price might be nearer £20. This isn't too much more than disk and the potential is certainly there for awesome games. Of course for the moment owners of C64 and C128 computers have the best of both worlds: cartridge, disk and tape. So get ready for exciting times ahead!

★ ***The heavily multiload Fiendish Freddy features numerous interlevel pictures and is perfect for cartridge.***

★ ***Batman: The Movie could well be one of the first Ocean back-catalogue games to be put on cartridge. RoboCop will surely follow.***

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Kelly Sumner is not only Commodore's National Sales Manager, but he's also worked for the company for over a decade. So if anyone knows the whys and wherefores of the C64GS, he does. After taking a look at the new GS in action, we settled down in his office for a loose chat about the C64, past and present.

Why do this to the C64? Why make the GS in the first place?

"There's a few reasons. The main reason is that we want to get a 'cradle to grave' situation. When the customer buys a product, like a game console, when they upgrade later we want them to keep with Commodore. That's one of the reasons the Amiga is so successful at the moment, due to the number of 64s that we sold. It just carries through. Another reason is that we believe there is a market there. We don't think it's as big as a lot of people may want you to believe, but it's important if there's a market there for Commodore to have a slice of that market. At the same time, the third reason is if we have a console on the market, it waters down the market for our competitors.

So those are the main reasons. Also we think the 64 is right for that market. People are happy to write for the 64, and let's face it most of the people who buy the 64 buy it as a games machine. So now they'll have a choice: they can either have it purely as a games machine for £60 less than the computer version, or they can have the computer version for educational or productivity type applications."

> **You can have a much bigger Batman game on a cartridge**
> KELLY SUMNER

Commodore nearly brought out a console before, after all weren't the 64 and the Amiga both consoles originally?

"Not really the 64. The 64 came out of the VIC 20 which was sold as a computer and the first 64s, which at the time were retailing at £345 I may add, were being used for businesses. In fact the guys on the team still get people who are using them as word processors and business computers. So it was a business/hobbyist machine, that's how the 64 came out.

"The Amiga technology was developed by guys trying to bring out the ultimate machine for the hobbyist market, whether it be games or whatever. So neither were ever really a console. There have been rumours of an Amiga console, but quite frankly, because unlike other manufacturers we make our own chips, we have limitations on the number of silicon wafers we can produce. So it makes no sense to go into the console market with the Amiga product at the moment. Maybe in a couple of years time, but not at the moment. We just couldn't fill the demand. But on the 64 technology it makes sense for us to go for a console. Because it is a C64; apart from one ROM there is no difference between the Commodore 64C and the Commodore 64 Game System."

How do you see the C64GS' chances when it is launched?

"I think it will become the number one product this year, depending on the amount of product the software houses can get onto the market. Mostly because of the Commodore name, particularly the Commodore 64 name as it has a fantastic reputation out there. And also we'll be better than our competitors because of the software support from the

Been there, seen it, done it. Kelly Sumner's twelve years at Commodore have made him convinced of the console's inevitable success

Old computers never die – they just turn into consoles! The C64 has had more facelifts than Doctor Who, and this time it doesn't even have a keyboard. PHIL SOUTH went to Commodore for a look at the new beast, and speculate on the future of the seemingly immortal games machine.

icked!

Hot Games

The machine comes with four games up front all on the one cart: *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O'Fun*, *Flimbo's Quest*, *Klax* and the old chestnut, *International Soccer*.

At the time we spoke to Commodore they had 46 games confirmed as being cart releases. Commodore estimate that there will be 60-70 top games on cartridge available before Christmas, and virtually hundreds next year. The reasoning behind the all-new games move is to give you big incentive to get the hottest new games on cart. There will come a time, not too far in the future it says, when games will be cartridge only releases and not on disk or tape at all.

major publishers in the UK. If you look at the market: there's an base of 55,000 Nintendos in the UK, there are just under 200,000 Segas, there are *no* Amstrad consoles at all because they haven't launched the product yet! But the 64 console, or at least machines that can take the cartridges that the 64GS will work on, has an installed base of 1.4 million. Let's not get carried away with that figure, let's put it in perspective. Last year we sold 206,000 C64s, the year before that 145,000 C64s. If you take that with what we will sell this year, you're talking about a minimum base of 500,000-750,000 people in the UK who can use cartridges. Now that's a very important number as far as a software house is concerned. They have limited capability for producing titles, they're obviously going to look into what the user base is. If can see there's a potential user base of 500,000 people that will obviously sway him to produce for the 64GS."

There are going to be buyers for the new games, even when nobody has bought a console yet?

"Yes, you look at the Amstrad... I'm not having a go at Amstrad at all here, by the way... they launch their console in September. If I was a publisher, I wouldn't bring out any software for it pre-Christmas, as most of them aren't going to be used until 25th December. So because we have this large installed user base, people are *rushing* to bring out software for it before Christmas for the launch. They know that from Day One it's going to be a goer. And quite a sizable one. You add up the user base of Nintendo and Sega and you still only add up to 250,000 units, which is half of the Commodore 64 base."

And I imagine it doesn't take long to transfer games from other media to the cartridge, either?

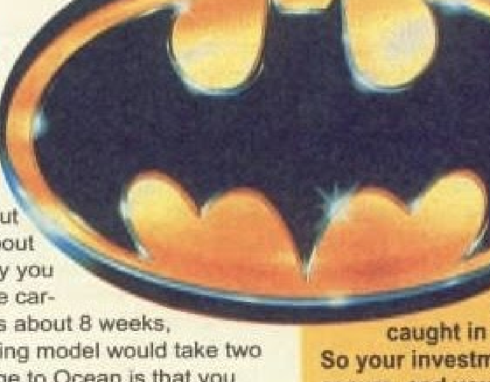
"No, it takes a couple of days. Let's take *Batman*, for example, that could be put on a cartridge in about two days. Obviously you have to produce the cartridges, which takes about 8 weeks, but the actual working model would take two days. The advantage to Ocean is that you can have a much bigger *Batman* game on a cartridge."

Is the capacity you can get on a cartridge that much bigger then?

"Yes it is, the traditional old style car-

People are rushing to bring out software for it before Christmas

KELLY SUMNER



Batman is scheduled as one of the first major releases on cartridge – how will the new version change?

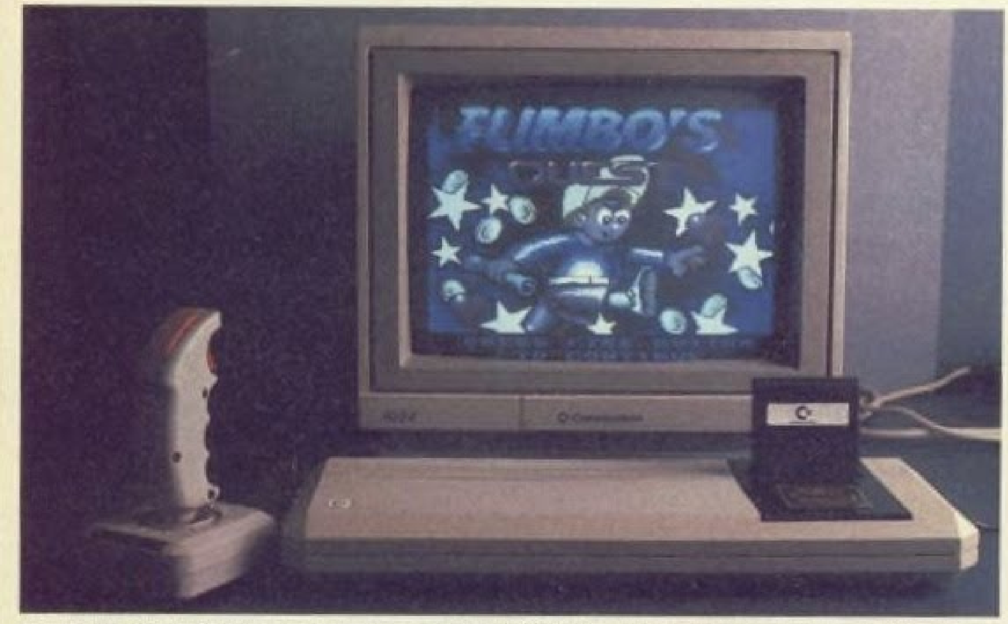
The 64 has been *the* game platform of choice for more people in the world for longer than any other computer ever made, so turning it into a pure games playing machine is no surprise. It already sports features like hardware sprites which modern game machine manufacturers claim is a new feature and it has an enormous software base out there: nearly one and a half million users.

Thousands of games have been written in the eight years since the release of the 64, so whatever Commodore does, it can't lose by altering the form of the machine itself.

Of course, just because the GS (Game System) is here doesn't mean that the 64 itself will die out. Goodness knows, Commodore would have to shoot people to *stop* them buying the 64 anyway. Sales continue to climb with no more advertising than the annual note in the press about this year's package deal. But the GS will turn people on to the 64 who don't want a fully blown computer, or can't handle tape and disk loading (loading from cartridge is virtually instantaneous).

Take a look at the back of your 64. Did you know your machine had a cartridge slot already? It wouldn't be surprising if you didn't. The cartridge technology never really took off when the 64 was originally made, so cartridge games have been in somewhat short supply. Not any more though. With the release of the GS, major software manufacturers are committed to producing all their hot new games on cart format. So all of us will be able to benefit from the GS, right away. If you've got a 64, write software for it or sell it, then the GS is a lot of good news.

The trick with carts is that you can't copy them, so piracy is cut off at a stroke. Secondly, the games load in seconds, rather than minutes from tape or disk. Thirdly, the game is yours forever, not just until the disk gets bent or the tape gets caught in your datasette heads. So your investment in the game is secure, and you can swap games in the knowledge that what you're getting is going to be good quality, not bugged or broken. Whichever way you slice it, the cartridge boom is going to be great for everyone.



Don't be fooled by appearances. The C64GS may not look as monolithic as some of the competitors it faces but the machine on which it is based was years ahead of its time when it was first released in 1982. With the emphasis now being placed on cartridge games of up to half a megabyte, the future of the C64 looks good for years to come

tridge is 128K. But most people will be using 256K cartridges, as opposed to 175K for the Commodore disk drive. And we ourselves are using a 512K cartridge, so there's quite a bit more capacity on there. Some of the games you're going to see before Christmas are going to take advantage of that, but more and more, as cartridge technology takes off, they'll be using that capacity."

So just like when disks first became available, games will develop to take advantage of the new format?

"Yes that's right. They've also got to give the person a reason to purchase a cartridge over and above cassette or disk. A cassette typically is £9.99, whereas a cartridge is going to be £19.99. What does the guy get extra? I think the most important thing is that he doesn't have to wait 30 mins to load a cassette, which normally he has to on a C64. I personally would pay that money to have instant load. What else does he get? Like you do on CD's you'll get more tracks or, in this case, other levels. I think the major reason people put their C64 or Spectrum +2 in the cupboard is not that the products aren't good, because they are good. It's just the *hassle* of cassettes. The technology hasn't changed for 8 years! I think that if I was a 64 owner today, I would go to cartridge because there's a limited time you can play after you've done your homework and before you go to bed. Your wasting a quarter or even a half of your playing time waiting for the thing to load."

Also there's the new technology angle, where 64 owners look around and see new technology, Amigas, CD ROMs, springing up all over and they say "Where's the new technology for me?"

"I think cartridge is the way it's going to go. It doesn't do anyone any good to have cassette based technology. It's no good for publishers, it's no good for Commodore and it's no good for the user. The publisher loses through piracy, Commodore loses through returns and the user wastes a lot of his leisure time. I really don't know what people *do* for thirty minutes while they load a game! Oh yes, and unlike a cassette there's no degradation. The cartridge user will be able to play the game year after year."

It's like a CD again, the quality of the product doesn't wane with use.

"I think in the market as a whole over the next two years you'll see cassettes and disks disappearing completely, and really the only media you'll see around will be cartridge or CD ROM. It's better for everyone; the capacity and longevity of those formats is much, much better."

They are also less easy to reproduce, as in piracy.

"We have to keep this industry strong, and pirates are ripping us all off. I do feel sorry for publishers, but cartridges should help."

John's original test rig with four megabits of RAM, using piggy-backed chips, and a battery back-up

How much longer has the 8 bit computer got?

"It depends what people do with it. I've worked for Commodore for twelve years, so year on year I've heard people say the 64's only got another year. And it's still around. It's a good product! This Christmas is going to be *another* 64 Christmas, and I think we're going to have at least another couple of years out of the 64. I'm sure it will celebrate its tenth anniversary in style. The software guys have now got to grips with the machine, they're now producing great software, and some of it is as good as the 16 bit software you see on other machines. So I think it's got a few more years yet."

The hub of Commodore's console revolution is the cartridge. Their old 16K carts are obviously of no use in these days of hundred K multiloads, so the task of producing a workable design fell to John Twiddy and Mev Dinc of Vivid Image. Stevie J went to Watford for a nose...

As well as the conversion of *Tau Ceti*, our cover tape, and *The Last Ninja* games, John Twiddy is also famed for designing Trilogic's expert cartridge and coding the 'Cyberload' tape mastering system. But it came as a surprise when he received a call from Commodore back in January of this year. "I was amazed when they contacted us, saying they were going to launch a console and wanted us to put together a four-game compilation to give away with the machine. It then turned out that they didn't actually have any hardware to put them on, and it developed from there!"

The cartridge had to be compatible with both the new console and all the existing C64s, and also offer the instant, large memory access that people have come to associate with the new wave of consoles.

"We designed circuits to provide a half meg access to the 64" says John. "Basically it's got a 4 megabit ROM (Read Only Memory) which is equivalent to 512K or roughly half a megabyte, although it does have the potential to carry up to 16 megabits, or nearly 2 megabytes! There are also two small switching chips, which bank in the memory in chunks. The three chips are off-the-shelf chips – it's only the circuitry and operating system which we designed."

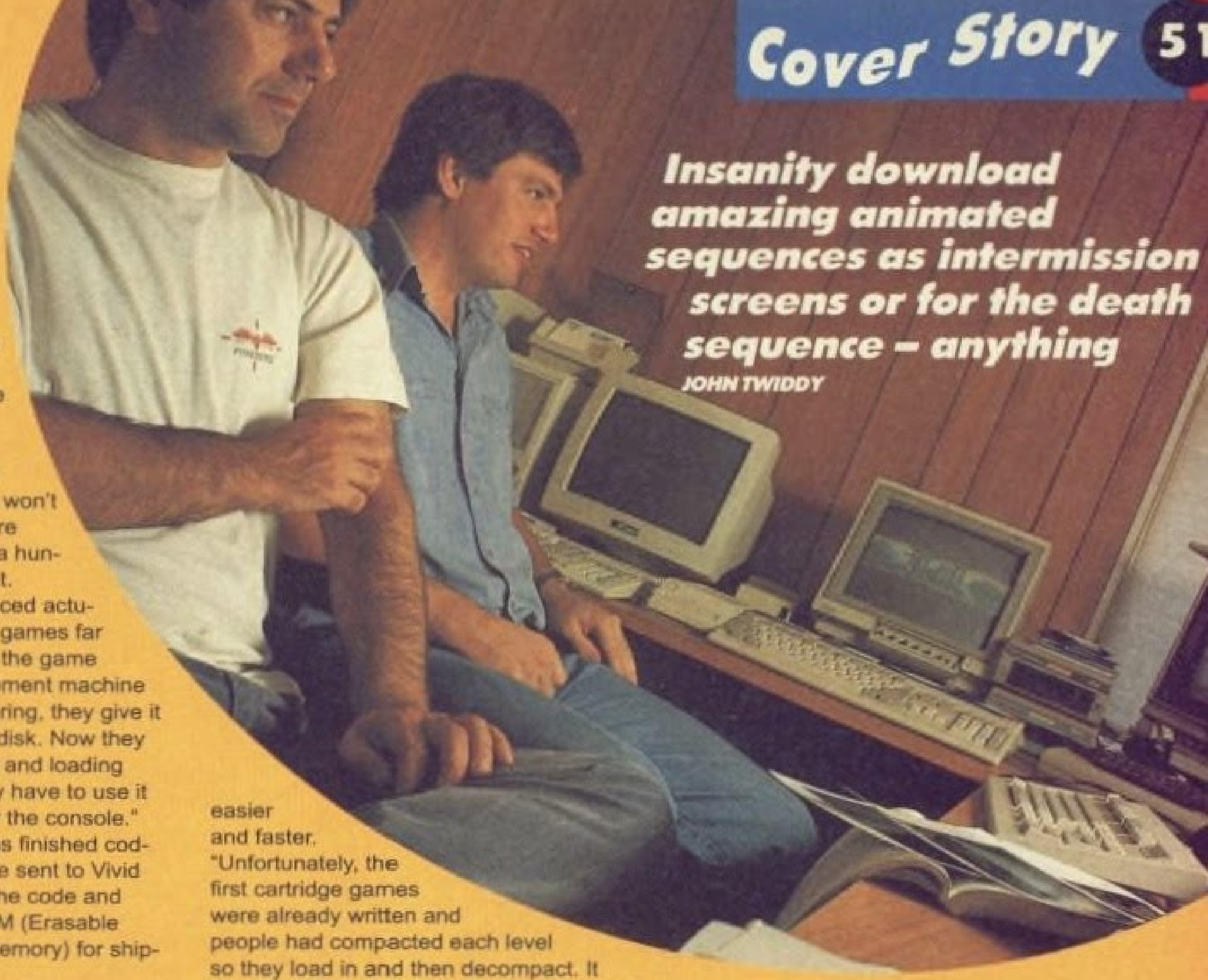
To make sure the cartridge is totally compatible with the console, Vivid Image were sent a replacement kernel ROM (the bit that carried the C64/console operating system) for their C64 development kit. "Commodore have tried to have extra software in the kernel, for window applications" said John. "You can now have drop-down windows, and windows with drop shadows. It does seem rather pointless at the moment since you can't easily utilise it with the console, and any software won't work with the standard C64."

In

Admittedly, the system is rather crude, but at least Commodore have made an effort toward future projects. Maybe, with a mouse plugged in, console owners will be able to access pull down menus, enabling them to play more complex games than the standard two-button joystick will allow...

John and Mev have also produced a development system which they can give out to publishers, allowing them to put their existing games on cartridge very easily.

stant Action



Insanity download amazing animated sequences as intermission screens or for the death sequence – anything
JOHN TWIDDY

The kernel of Vivid Image itself. Mev Dinc (left) and John Twiddy with the development machines on which they designed the GS operating system

"What they'll have is an emulation cartridge, some software and written guidelines on how best to use the system," explains John. "The emulation cartridge has ROMs and other chips in there, which makes a C64 and disk drive act in the same way as a console and cartridge. It's also compatible with disk turbos to make life easier for the programmers. We're actually producing the units ourselves, although we won't have massive demand – we're expecting to send out about a hundred: that should be sufficient.

"The utilities we've produced actually make writing disk-based games far easier. Programmers rely on the game being resident in the development machine and, when it comes to mastering, they give it to someone else to put it on disk. Now they can have everything working and loading from disk – so they don't only have to use it as a development system for the console."

Once the programmer has finished coding, all the necessary files are sent to Vivid Image so John can convert the code and store the game on an EPROM (Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory) for shipping to ROM manufacturers.

"Once we've produced the EPROM we can put it on a cart and give it to the company who can then see the game running on the console without a disk drive or tape deck plugged in. They can play it and see that it works okay, before sending it off to the ROM manufacturer.

"Playtesting can take quite a long time – if a bug is found in tape or disk games, they can be recalled for re-mastering, but the price of doing that on cartridge is prohibitive, so the game must be absolutely bug-free before the final ROMs are burned."

COMPACT AND BIJOU

The restriction of 64K or a number of small loads is removed to a degree when you have half a meg of memory to play but publishers are still keen to save money by having the games on as small a cartridge as possible. Vivid Image have got this angle covered too: "We have a range of compactors varying in efficiency versus speed," explains John. "There are times when the code doesn't need to decompact quickly, so it can afford to be a smaller file.

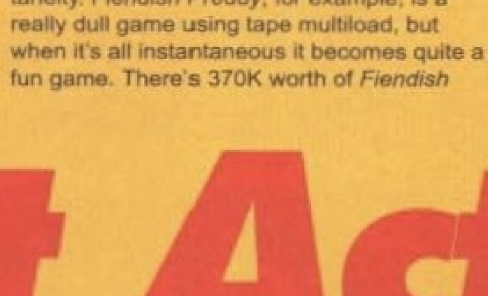
"This whole process is completely invisible to the operating system of the cartridge, so programmers don't have to worry about it at all – they simply gives us the files. That makes the process of coding for the cartridge easier and faster.

"Unfortunately, the first cartridge games were already written and people had compacted each level so they load in and then decompact. It would have been very nice to have the extra time to get them to modify the programs since, when you're dealing with something that loads instantaneously and then have to wait five seconds for it to decompact, it really spoils the effect.

"The beauty of the cartridge is its instantaneity. *Fiendish Freddy*, for example, is a really dull game using tape multiload, but when it's all instantaneous it becomes quite a fun game. There's 370K worth of *Fiendish Freddy* on the cartridge – and now the only thing that slows it down is the music fade-out, which runs just before the next section is loaded in!"

The increased memory size also means extra improvements in C64 games. "Apart from the ability to load in lots of hi-res pictures and animation routines, there's also the capacity to download huge look-up data tables. This can speed up complex calculations for things like 3D routines for vector graphic games, making the process more efficient and faster. In a 64K game you don't have enough room to put in a 30 or 40K look-up table and include the rest of the game. With cartridge, you can simply download the table whenever it's needed. The potential is very exciting.

"What we'd like is for people to start writing specially for the cartridge; to show lots of hi-res pictures, nice sampled music, just little presentation points like that. You could instantly download amazing animated sequences as intermission screens, or for the death sequence – anything!" Anything at all.



The new kernel ROM from the console includes a new boot-up screen. When you turn on the machine, you don't have the old blue Commodore 64 BASIC screen, you get an animated screen telling you to switch off the machine and insert a cartridge

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Find out exactly what the new C64 console means to you! – Page 48

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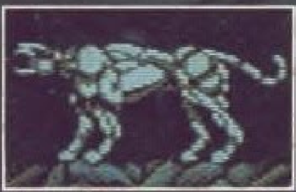

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OY! WHERE'S MY CARD AND CASSETTE? DON'T ASK ME – ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT!

C64 GS GAMES LIST

Ocean - 12 (£19.99 each, down to £14.99 from Oct 1991)

Batman - 1990
Chase HQ 2 - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Navy Seals - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Pang - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Robocop 2 - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Shadow Of The Beast - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Battle Command - 1991
Robocop 3 - 1991 (Cartridge Only Game)
Space Gun - 1991
Terminator 2 - 1991 - needs keyboard to start!
Toki - 1991 (Cartridge Only Game)
Double Dragon - 1992 only sold at computer show, rare!

Domark - 3 (£19.99 each)

Badlands - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Cyberball - 1990 (Cartridge Only Game)
Vindicators - 1990

System 3 - 2 (£24.95 each)

Last Ninja Remix - 1990
Myth - 1990

Commodore - 1

C64 Games System, 1990 (4 games: Fiendish Freddy, Flimbo's Quest, Klax, International Soccer)

Dinamic - 5

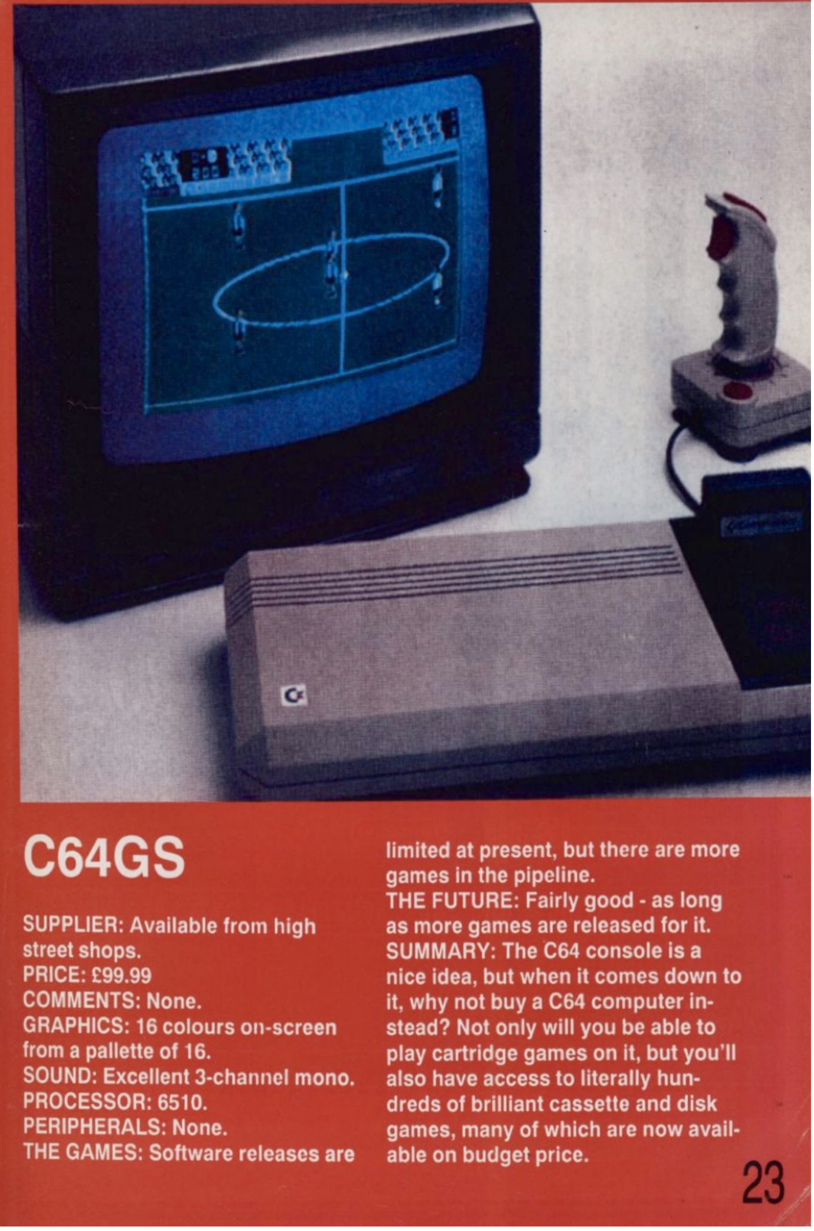
After The War - 1990
Aspar GP Master - 1990
Astromarine Corps - 1990
Narco Police - 1990
Satan - 1990

Disc Company - 2

Funplay, 1990 (Fast Food, Pro Skateboard, Pro Tennis)
Power Play 64, 1990 (Microprose Soccer, Rick Dangerous, Stunt Car Racer)

Silverrock - 3

Guldkorn Expressen - 1991
Harold Hardtand
Skaermtrolden Hugo, 1990



C64GS

SUPPLIER: Available from high street shops.
PRICE: £99.99
COMMENTS: None.
GRAPHICS: 16 colours on-screen from a pallette of 16.
SOUND: Excellent 3-channel mono.
PROCESSOR: 6510.
PERIPHERALS: None.
THE GAMES: Software releases are limited at present, but there are more games in the pipeline.
THE FUTURE: Fairly good - as long as more games are released for it.
SUMMARY: The C64 console is a nice idea, but when it comes down to it, why not buy a C64 computer instead? Not only will you be able to play cartridge games on it, but you'll also have access to literally hundreds of brilliant cassette and disk games, many of which are now available on budget price.

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Canned - 55

Gazza 2 (Active Minds)
Kick Off 2 (Anco)
Buggy Ranger (Dinamic)
Hard Drivin' (Domark)
License To Kill (Domark)
Spy Who Loved Me (Domark)
Subbuteo (Electronic Zoo)
Orcus (Electronic Zoo)
The Games – Summer Edition (Epyx)
The Games – Winter Edition (Epyx)
California Games (Epyx)
Venus The Flytrap (Gremlin)
Prohibition (Infogrames)
Bubble Ghost (Infogrames)
Rick Dangerous 2 (Microprose)
Starglider 2 (Microprose)
Battlechess (Mindscape)
Ultima VI (Mindscape)
Bloodwych (Mirrorsoft)
Falcon (Mirrorsoft)
Plotting (Ocean)
Addams Family (Ocean)
Hook (Ocean)
Puzznic (Ocean)
Snow Bros (Ocean)
Space Rogue (Origin)
Barbarian 3 (Palace)
Turrican 2 (Rainbow Arts
X-Out (Rainbow Arts)
Wrath of the Demon (Readysoft)
IK Deluxe (System 3)
Vendetta (System 3)
Last Ninja 3 (System 3)
Turbocharge (System 3)
Putty (System 3)
Battlestorm (Titus)
Crazy Bikes (Titus)
Crazy Cars 2 (Titus)
Crime Does Not Pay (Titus)
Wild Streets (Titus)
Dick Tracy (Titus)
Fire and Forget 2 (Titus)
Wild Streets (Titus)
Armalyte 2 (Thalamus)
Greatest Hits (Thalamus)
Armalyte/Sanxion (Thalamus)
Hawkeye/Quedex (Thalamus)
Delta/Hunters Moon (Thalamus)
Creatures/Summer Camp (Thalamus)
Snare/Retrograde/Heat Seaker (Thalamus)
Pro Tennis Tour 2 (Ubi-Soft)
B.A.T (Ubi-Soft)
Moonwalker (US Gold)
Racing Game construction kit (US Gold)
Golden Axe (Virgin)

CHEETAH ANNIHILATOR

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